POEMS

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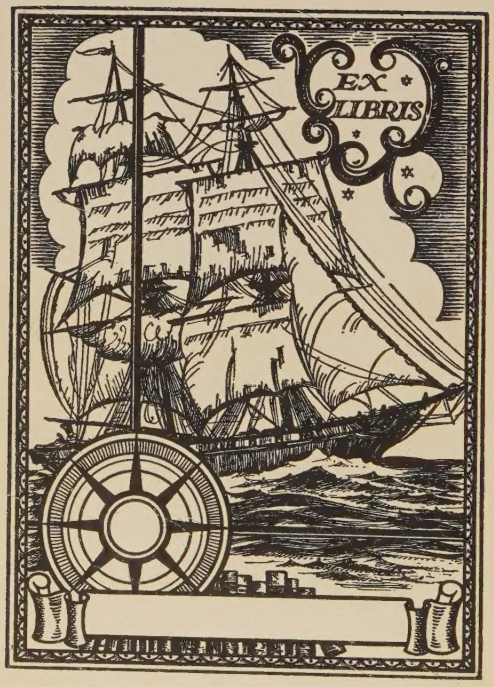
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THE LADY OF SHALOTT

AND OTHER POEMS.

THE LADY OF SHALOTT.

PART I.

On either side the river lie
Long fields of barley and of rye,
That clothe the wold and meet the sky;
And thro' the field the road runs by
To many-tower'd Camelot;
And up and down the people go,
Gazing where the lilies blow
Round an island there below,
The island of Shalott.

Willows whiten, aspens quiver,
Little breezes dusk and shiver
Thro' the wave that runs for ever
By the island in the river
Flowing down to Camelot.
Four gray walls, and four gray towers,
Overlook a space of flowers,
And the silent isle imbowers
The Lady of Shalott.

By the margin, willow-veil'd,
Slide the heavy barges trail'd
By slow horses; and unhail'd
The shallop flitteth silken-sail'd
Skimming down to Camelot:
But who hath seen her wave her hand?
Or at the casement seen her stand?
Or is she known in all the land,
The Lady of Shalott?

Only reapers, reaping early
In among the bearded barley,
Hear a song that echoes cheerly
From the river winding clearly,
Down to tower'd Camelot:
And by the moon the reaper weary,
Piling sheaves in uplands airy,
Listening, whispers "'Tis the fairy
Lady of Shalott."

PART II.

There she weaves by night and day
A magic web with colors gay.
She has heard a whisper say,
A curse is on her if she stay
To look down to Camelot.
She knows not what the curse may be,
And so she weaveth steadily,
And little other care hath she,
The Lady of Shalott.

And moving thro' a mirror clear
That hangs before her all the year,
Shadows of the world appear.
There she sees the highway near
Winding down to Camelot:
There the river eddy whirls,
And there the surly village-churls,
And the red cloaks of market girls,
Pass onward from Shalott.

Sometimes a troop of damsels glad,
An abbot on an ambling pad,
Sometimes a curly shepherd-lad,
Or long-hair'd page in crimson clad,
Goes by to tower'd Camelot;
And sometimes thro' the mirror blue
The knights come riding two and two:
She hath no loyal knight and true,
The Lady of Shalott.

But in her web she still delights
To weave the mirror's magic sights,
For often thro' the silent nights
A funeral, with plumes and lights
And music, went to Camelot:
Or when the moon was overhead,
Came two young lovers lately wed;
"I am half sick of shadows," said
The Lady of Shalott.

PART III.

A BOW-SHOT from her bower-eaves,
He rode between the barley-sheaves,
The sun came dazzling thro' the leaves,
And flamed upon the brazen greaves
Of bold Sir Lancelot.
A red-cross knight for ever kneel'd
To a lady in his shield,
That sparkled on the yellow field,
Beside remote Shalott.

The gemmy bridle glitter'd free,
Like to some branch of stars we see
Hung in the golden Galaxy.
The bridle bells rang merrily
As he rode down to Camelot:
And from his blazon'd baldric slung
A mighty silver bugle hung,
And as he rode his armor rung,
Beside remote Shalott.

All in the blue unclouded weather
Thick-jewell'd shone the saddle-leather,
The helmet and the helmet-feather
Burn'd like one burning flame together,
As he rode down to Camelot.
As often thro' the purple night,
Below the starry clusters bright,
Some bearded meteor, trailing light,
Moves over still Shalott.

His broad clear brow in sunlight glow'd;
On burnish'd hooves his war-horse trode;
From underneath his helmet flow'd
His coal-black curls as on he rode,
As he rode down to Camelot.
From the bank and from the river
He flash'd into the crystal mirror,
'Tirra lirra,' by the river
Sang Sir Lancelot.

She left the web, she left the loom,
She made three paces thro' the room,
She saw the water-lily bloom,
She saw the helmet and the plume,
She look'd down to Camelot.
Out flew the web and floated wide;
The mirror crack'd from side to side;
'The curse is come upon me,' cried
The Lady of Shalott.

PART IV.

IN the stormy east-wind straining,
The pale yellow woods were waning,
The broad stream in his banks complaining,
Heavily the low sky raining
Over tower'd Camelot;
Down she came and found a boat
Beneath a willow left afloat,
And round about the prow she wrote
The Lady of Shalott.

And down the river's dim expanse
Like some bold seer in a trance,
Seeing all his own mischance—
With a glassy countenance
Did she look to Camelot.
And at the closing of the day
She loosed the chain, and down she lay;
The broad stream bore her far away,
The Lady of Shalott.

Lying, robed in snowy white
That loosely flew to left and right—
The leaves upon her falling light—
Thro' the noises of the night
She floated down to Camelot:
And as the boat-head wound along
The willowy hills and fields among,
They heard her singing her last song,
The Lady of Shalott.

Heard a carol, mournful, holy,
Chanted loudly, chanted lowly,
Till her blood was frozen slowly,
And her eyes were darken'd wholly,
Turn'd to tower'd Camelot.
For ere she reach'd upon the tide
The first house by the water-side,
Singing in her song she died,
The Lady of Shalott.

Under tower and balcony,
By garden-wall and gallery,
A gleaming shape she floated by,
Dead-pale between the houses high,
Silent into Camelot.
Out upon the wharfs they came,
Knight and burgher, lord and dame,
And round the prow they read her name,
The Lady of Shalott.

"THE MIRROR CRACK'D FROM SIDE TO SIDE."—*Page*

Who is this? and what is here?
And in the lighted palace near
Died the sound of royal cheer;
And they cross'd themselves for fear,
All the knights at Camelot:
But Lancelot mused a little space;
He said, 'She has a lovely face;
God in his mercy lend her grace,
The Lady of Shalott.'

MARIANA IN THE SOUTH.

With one black shadow at its feet,
The house thro' all the level shines,
Close-latticed to the brooding heat,
And silent in its dusty vines:
A faint-blue ridge upon the right,
An empty river-bed before,
And shallows on a distant shore,
In glaring sand and inlets bright.
But 'Ave Mary,' made she moan,
And 'Ave Mary,' night and morn,
And 'Ah,' she sang, 'to be all alone,
To live forgotten, and love forlorn.'

She, as her carol sadder grew,
From brow and bosom slowly down
Thro' rosy taper fingers drew
Her streaming curls of deepest brown
To left and right, and made appear
Still-lighted in a secret shrine,
Her melancholy eyes divine,
The home of woe without a tear.
And 'Ave Mary,' was her moan,
'Madonna, sad is night and morn,'
And 'Ah,' she sang, 'to be all alone,
To live forgotten, and love forlorn.'

Till all the crimson changed, and past
Into deep orange o'er the sea,
Low on her knees herself she cast,
Before Our Lady murmur'd she;
Complaining, 'Mother, give me grace
To help me of my weary load.'
And on the liquid mirror glow'd
The clear perfection of her face.
'Is this the form,' she made her moan,
'That won his praises night and morn?'
And 'Ah,' she said, 'but I wake alone,
I sleep forgotten, I wake forlorn.'

Nor bird would sing, nor lamb would bleat,
Nor any cloud would cross the vault,
But day increased from heat to heat,
On stony drought and steaming salt;
Till now at noon she slept again,
And seem'd knee-deep in mountain grass,
And heard her native breezes pass,
And runlets babbling down the glen.
She breathed in sleep a lower moan,
And murmuring, as at night and morn,
She thought, 'My spirit is here alone,
Walks forgotten, and is forlorn.'

Dreaming, she knew it was a dream:
She felt he was and was not there.
She woke: the babble of the stream
Fell, and, without, the steady glare
Shrank one sick willow sere and small.
The river-bed was dusty-white;
And all the furnace of the light
Struck up against the blinding wall.
She whisper'd, with a stifled moan
More inward than at night or morn,
'Sweet Mother, let me not here alone
Live forgotten and die forlorn.'

And, rising, from her bosom drew
Old letters, breathing of her worth,
For 'Love,' they said, 'must needs be true,
To what is loveliest upon earth.'
An image seem'd to pass the door,
To look at her with slight, and say

'But now thy beauty flows away,
So be alone for evermore.'
'O cruel heart,' she changed her tone,
'And cruel love, whose end is scorn,
Is this the end to be left alone,
To live forgotten, and die forlorn?'

But sometimes in the falling day
An image seem'd to pass the door,
To look into her eyes and say,
'But thou shalt be alone no more.'
And flaming downward over all
From heat to heat the day decreased,
And slowly rounded to the east
The one black shadow from the wall.
'The day to night,' she made her moan,
'The day to night, the night to morn,
And day and night I am left alone
To live forgotten, and love forlorn.

At eve a dry cicala sung,
There came a sound as of the sea;
Backward the lattice-blind she flung,
And lean'd upon the balcony.
There all in spaces rosy-bright
Large Hesper glitter'd on her tears,
And deepening thro' the silent spheres
Heaven over Heaven rose the night.
And weeping then she made her moan,
'The night comes on that knows not morn,
When I shall cease to be all alone,
To live forgotten, and love forlorn.'

THE TWO VOICES.

A STILL small voice spake unto me,
'Thou art so full of misery,
Were it not better not to be?'

Then to the still small voice I said;
'Let me not cast in endless shade
What is so wonderfully made.'

To which the voice did urge reply;
'To-day I saw the dragon-fly
Come from the wells where he did lie.

'An inner impulse rent the veil
Of his old husk: from head to tail
Came out clear plates of sapphire mail.

'He dried his wings: like gauze they grew;
Thro' crofts and pastures wet with dew
A living flash of light he flew.'

I said, 'When first the world began,
Young Nature thro' five cycles ran,
And in the sixth she moulded man.

'She gave him mind, the lordliest
Proportion, and, above the rest,
Dominion in the head and breast.'

Thereto the silent voice replied;
'Self-blinded are you by your pride:
Look up thro' night: the world is wide.

'This truth within thy mind rehearse,
That in a boundless universe
Is boundless better, boundless worse.

'Think you this mould of hopes and fears
Could find no statelier than his peers
In yonder hundred million spheres?'

It spake, moreover, in my mind:
'Tho' thou wert scatter'd to the wind,
Yet is there plenty of the kind.'

Then did my response clearer fall:
'No compound of this earthly ball
Is like another, all in all.'

To which he answer'd scoffingly;
'Good soul! suppose I grant it thee,
Who'll weep for thy deficiency?

'Or will one beam be less intense,
When thy peculiar difference
Is cancell'd in the world of sense?'

I would have said, 'Thou canst not know,'

But my full heart, that work'd below,
Rain'd thro' my sight its overflow.

Again the voice spake unto me:
'Thou art so steep'd in misery,
Surely 'twere better not to be.

'Thine anguish will not let thee sleep,
Nor any train of reason keep:
Thou canst not think, but thou wilt
weep.'

I said, 'The years with change advance:
If I make dark my countenance,
I shut my life from happier chance.

'Some turn this sickness yet might
take,
Ev'n yet.' But he: 'What drug can make
A wither'd palsy cease to shake?'

I wept, 'Tho' I should die, I know
That all about the thorn will blow
In tufts of rosy-tinted snow;

'And men, thro' novel spheres of
thought
Still moving after truth long sought,
Will learn new things when I am not.'

'Yet,' said the secret voice, 'some
time,
Sooner or later, will gray prime
Make thy grass hoar with early rime.

'Not less swift souls that yearn for
light,
Rapt after heaven's starry flight,
Would sweep the tracts of day and
night.

'Not less the bee would range her cells,
The furzy prickle fire the dells,
The foxglove cluster dappled bells.'

I said that 'all the years invent;
Each month is various to present
The world with some development.

'Were this not well, to bide mine hour,
Tho' watching from a ruin'd tower
How grows the day of human power?'

'The highest-mounted mind,' he said,
'Still sees the sacred morning spread
The silent summit overhead.

'Will thirty seasons render plain
Those lonely lights that still remain,
Just breaking over land and main?

'Or make that morn, from his cold
crown
And crystal silence creeping down,
Flood with full daylight glebe and
town?

'Forerun thy peers, thy time, and let
Thy feet, millenniums hence, be set
In midst of knowledge, dream'd not
yet.

'Thou hast not gain'd a real height,
Nor art thou nearer to the light,
Because the scale is infinite.

''Twere better not to breathe or speak,
Than cry for strength, remaining weak,
And seem to find, but still to seek.

'Moreover, but to seem to find
Asks what thou lackest, thought
resign'd,
A healthy frame, a quiet mind.'

I said, 'When I am gone away,
"He dared not tarry," men will say,
Doing dishonor to my clay.'

'This is more vile,' he made reply,
'To breathe and loathe, to live and
sigh,
Than once from dread of pain to die.

'Sick art thou—a divided will
Still heaping on the fear of ill
The fear of men, a coward still.

'Do men love thee? Art thou so
bound
To men, that how thy name may sound
Will vex thee lying underground?

'The memory of the wither'd leaf
In endless time is scarce more brief
Than of the garner'd Autumn-sheaf.

'Go, vexed Spirit, sleep in trust;
The right ear, that is fill'd with dust,
Hears little of the false or just.'

'Hard task, to pluck resolve,' I cried,
'From emptiness and the waste wide
Of that abyss, or scornful pride!

'Nay—rather yet that I could raise
One hope that warm'd me in the days
While still I yearn'd for human praise.

'When, wide in soul and bold of tongue,
Among the tents I paused and sung,
The distant battle flash'd and rung.

'I sung the joyful Pæan clear,
And, sitting, burnish'd without fear
The brand, the buckler, and the spear—

'Waiting to strive a happy strife,
To war with falsehood to the knife,
And not to lose the good of life—

'Some hidden principle to move,
To put together, part and prove,
And mete the bounds of hate and love—

'As far as might be, to carve out
Free space for every human doubt,
That the whole mind might orb about—

'To search thro' all I felt or saw,
The springs of life, the depths of awe,
And reach the law within the law:

'At least, not rotting like a weed,
But, having sown some generous seed,
Fruitful of further thought and deed,

'To pass, when Life her light withdraws,
Not void of righteous self-applause,
Nor in a merely selfish cause—

'In some good cause, not in mine own,
To perish, wept for, honor'd, known,
And like a warrior overthrown;

'Whose eyes are dim with glorious tears,
When, soil'd with noble dust, he hears
His country's war-song thrill his ears:

'Then dying of a mortal stroke,
What time the foeman's line is broke,
And all the war is roll'd in smoke.'

'Yea!' said the voice, 'thy dream was good,
While thou abodest in the bud.
It was the stirring of the blood.

'If Nature put not forth her power
About the opening of the flower,
Who is it that could live an hour?

'Then comes the check, the change, the fall,
Pain rises up, old pleasures pall.
There is one remedy for all.

'Yet hadst thou, thro' enduring pain,
Link'd month to month with such a chain
Of knitted purport, all were vain.

'Thou hadst not between death and birth
Dissolved the riddle of the earth.
So were thy labor little-worth.

'That men with knowledge merely play'd,
I told thee—hardly nigher made,
Tho' scaling slow from grade to grade;

'Much less this dreamer, deaf and blind,
Named man, may hope some truth to find,
That bears relation to the mind.

'For every worm beneath the moon
Draws different threads, and late and soon
Spins, toiling out his own cocoon.

'Cry, faint not: either Truth is born
Beyond the polar gleam forlorn,
Or in the gateways of the morn.

'Cry, faint not, climb: the summits slope
Beyond the furthest flights of hope,
Wrapt in dense cloud from base to cope.

'Sometimes a little corner shines,
As over rainy mist inclines
A gleaming crag with belts of pines.

'I will go forward, sayest thou,
I shall not fail to find her now.
Look up, the fold is on her brow.

'If straight thy track, or if oblique,
Thou know'st not. Shadows thou dost strike,
Embracing cloud, Ixion-like;

'And owning but a little more
Than beasts, abidest lame and poor,
Calling thyself a little lower

'Than angels. Cease to wail and brawl!
Why inch by inch to darkness crawl?
There is one remedy for all.'

'O dull, one-sided voice,' said I,
'Wilt thou make everything a lie,
To flatter me that I may die?

'I know that age to age succeeds,
Blowing a noise of tongues and deeds,
A dust of systems and of creeds.

'I cannot hide that some have striven,
Achieving calm, to whom was given
The joy that mixes man with Heaven:

'Who, rowing hard against the stream,
Saw distant gates of Eden gleam,
And did not dream it was a dream;

'But heard, by secret transport led,
Ev'n in the charnels of the dead,
The murmur of the fountain-head—

'Which did accomplish their desire,
Bore and forebore, and did not tire,
Like Stephen, an unquenched fire.

'He heeded not reviling tones,
Nor sold his heart to idle moans,
Tho' cursed and scorn'd, and bruised with stones:

'But looking upward, full of grace,
He pray'd, and from a happy place
God's glory smote him on the face.'

The sullen answer slid betwixt:
'Not that the grounds of hope were fix'd,
The elements were kindlier mix'd.'

I said, 'I toil beneath the curse,
But, knowing not the universe,
I fear to slide from bad to worse.

'And that, in seeking to undo
One riddle, and to find the true,
I knit a hundred others new:

'Or that this anguish fleeting hence,
Unmanacled from bonds of sense,
Be fix'd and froz'n to permanence:

'For I go, weak from suffering here:
Naked I go, and void of cheer:
What is it that I may not fear?'

'Consider well,' the voice replied,
'His face, that two hours since hath died;
Wilt thou find passion, pain or pride?

'Will he obey when one commands?
Or answer should one press his hands?
He answers not, nor understands.

'His palms are folded on his breast:
There is no other thing express'd
But long disquiet merged in rest.

'His lips are very mild and meek:
Tho' one should smite him on the cheek,
And on the mouth, he will not speak.

'His little daughter, whose sweet face
He kiss'd, taking his last embrace,
Becomes dishonor to her race—

'His sons grow up that bear his name,
Some grow to honor, some to shame,—
But he is chill to praise or blame.

'He will not hear the north-wind rave,
Nor, moaning, household shelter crave
From winter rains that beat his grave.

'High up the vapors fold and swim:
About him broods the twilight dim:
The place he knew forgetteth him.'

'If all be dark, vague voice,' I said,
'These things are wrapt in doubt and dread,
Nor canst thou show the dead are dead.

'The sap dries up: the plant declines.
A deeper tale my heart divines.
Know I not Death? the outward signs?

'I found him when my years were few;
A shadow on the graves I knew,
And darkness in the village yew.

'From grave to grave the shadow crept:
In her still place the morning wept:
Touch'd by his feet the daisy slept.

'The simple senses crown'd his head:
"Omega! thou art Lord," they said,
"We find no motion in the dead."

'Why, if man rot in dreamless ease,
Should that plain fact, as taught by these,
Not make him sure that he shall cease?

'Who forged that other influence,
That heat of inward evidence,
By which he doubts against the sense?

'He owns the fatal gift of eyes,
That read his spirit blindly wise,
Not simple as a thing that dies.

'Here sits he shaping wings to fly:
His heart forebodes a mystery:
He names the name Eternity.

'That type of Perfect in his mind
In Nature can he nowhere find.
He sows himself on every wind.

'He seems to hear a Heavenly Friend,
And thro' thick veils to apprehend
A labor working to an end.

'The end and the beginning vex
His reason: many things perplex,
With motions, checks, and counter-checks.

'He knows a baseness in his blood
At such strange war with something good,
He may not do the thing he would.

'Heaven opens inward, chasms yawn,
Vast images in glimmering dawn,
Half shown, are broken and withdrawn.

'Ah! sure within him and without,
Could his dark wisdom find it out,
There must be answer to his doubt,

'But thou canst answer not again.
With thine own weapon art thou slain,
Or thou wilt answer but in vain.

'The doubt would rest, I dare not solve.
In the same circle we revolve.
Assurance only breeds resolve.'

As when a billow, blown against,
Falls back, the voice with which I fenced
A little ceased, but recommenced.

'Where wert thou when thy father play'd
In his free field, and pastime made,
A merry boy in sun and shade?

'A merry boy they call'd him then,
He sat upon the knees of men
In days that never come again.

'Before the little ducts began
To feed thy bones with lime, and ran
Their course, till thou wert also man:

'Who took a wife, who rear'd his race,
Whose wrinkles gather'd on his face,
Whose troubles number with his days:

'A life of nothings, nothing-worth,
From that first nothing ere his birth
To that last nothing under earth!'

'These words,' I said, 'are like the rest;
No certain clearness, but at best
A vague suspicion of the breast:

'But if I grant, thou mightst defend
The thesis which thy words intend—
That to begin implies to end;

'Yet how should I for certain hold,
Because my memory is so cold,
That I first was in human mould?

'I cannot make this matter plain,
But I would shoot, howe'er in vain,
A random arrow from the brain.

'It may be that no life is found,
Which only to one engine bound
Falls off, but cycles always round.

'As old mythologies relate,
Some draught of Lethe might await
The slipping thro' from state to state.

'As here we find in trances, men
Forget the dream that happens then,
Until they fall in trance again.

'So might we, if our state were such
As one before, remember much,
For those two likes might meet and touch.

'But, if I lapsed from nobler place,
Some legend of a fallen race
Alone might hint of my disgrace;

'Some vague emotion of delight
In gazing up an Alpine height,
Some yearning toward the lamps of night;

'Or if thro' lower lives I came—
Tho' all experience past became
Consolidate in mind and frame—

'I might forget my weaker lot;
For is not our first year forgot?
The haunts of memory echo not.

'And men, whose reason long was blind,
From cells of madness unconfined,
Of lose whole years of darker mind.

'Much more, if first I floated free,
As naked essence, must I be
Incompetent of memory:

'For memory dealing but with time,
And he with matter, could she climb
Beyond her own material prime?

'Moreover, something is or seems,
That touches me with mystic gleams,
Like glimpses of forgotten dreams—

'Of something felt, like something here;
Of something done, I know not where;
Such as no language may declare.'

The still voice laugh'd. 'I talk,' said he,
'Not with thy dreams. Suffice it thee
Thy pain is a reality.'

'But thou,' said I, 'hast missed thy mark,
Who sought'st to wreck my mortal ark,
By making all the horizon dark.

'Why not set forth, if I should do
This rashness, that which might ensue
With this old soul in organs new?

'Whatever crazy sorrow saith,
No life that breathes with human breath
Has ever truly long'd for death.

''Tis life, whereof our nerves are scant,
Oh life, not death, for which we pant;
More life, and fuller, that I want.'

I ceased, and sat as one forlorn.
Then said the voice, in quiet scorn,
'Behold, it is the Sabbath morn.'

And I arose, and I released
The casement, and the light increased
With freshness in the dawning east.

Like soften'd airs that blowing steal,
When meres begin to uncongeal,
The sweet church bells began to peal.

On to God's house the people prest:
Passing the place where each must rest,
Each enter'd like a welcome guest.

One walk'd between his wife and child,
With measured footfall firm and mild,
And now and then he gravely smiled.

The prudent partner of his blood
Lean'd on him, faithful, gentle, good,
Wearing the rose of womanhood.

And in their double love secure,
The little maiden walk'd demure,
Pacing with downward eyelids pure.

These three made unity so sweet,
My frozen heart began to beat,
Remembering its ancient heat.

I blest them, and they wander'd on:
I spoke, but answer came there none:
The dull and bitter voice was gone.

A second voice was at mine ear,
A little whisper silver-clear,
A murmur, 'Be of better cheer.'

As from some blissful neighborhood,
A notice faintly understood,
'I see the end, and know the good.'

A little hint to solace woe,
A hint, a whisper breathing low,
'I may not speak of what I know.'

Like an Æolian harp that wakes
No certain air, but overtakes
Far thought with music that it makes:

Such seem'd the whisper at my side:
'What is it thou knowest, sweet voice?' I cried.
'A hidden hope,' the voice replied:

So heavenly-toned, that in that hour
From out my sullen heart a power
Broke, like the rainbow from the shower,

To feel, altho' no tongue can prove,
That every cloud, that spreads above
And veileth love, itself is love.

And forth into the fields I went,
And Nature's living motion lent
The pulse of hope to discontent.

I wonder'd at the bounteous hours,
The slow result of winter showers:
You scarce could see the grass for flowers.

I wonder'd, while I paced along:
The woods were fill'd so full with song,
There seem'd no room for sense of wrong;

And all so variously wrought,
I marvell'd how the mind was brought
To anchor by one gloomy thought;

And wherefore rather I made choice
To commune with that barren voice,
Than him that said, 'Rejoice! Rejoice!'

"IN YONDER CHAIR I SEE HIM SIT."—*Page 11.*

THE MILLER'S DAUGHTER.

I SEE the wealthy miller yet,
His double chin, his portly size,
And who that knew him could forget
The busy wrinkles round his eyes?
The slow wise smile that, round about
His dusty forehead drily curl'd,
Seem'd half-within and half-without,
And full of dealings with the world?

In yonder chair I see him sit,
Three fingers round the old silver cup—
I see his gray eyes twinkle yet
At his own jest—gray eyes lit up
With summer lightnings of a soul
So full of summer warmth, so glad,
So healthy, sound, and clear and whole,
His memory scarce can make me sad.

Yet fill my glass: give me one kiss:
My own sweet Alice, we must die.
There's somewhat in this world amiss
Shall be unriddled by and by.
There's somewhat flows to us in life,
But more is taken quite away.
Pray, Alice, pray, my darling wife,
That we may die the self-same day.

Have I not found a happy earth?
I least should breathe a thought of pain.
Would God renew me from my birth
I'd almost live my life again.
So sweet it seems with thee to walk,
And once again to woo thee mine—
It seems in after-dinner talk
Across the walnuts and the wine—

To be the long and listless boy
Late-left an orphan of the squire,
Where this old mansion mounted high
Looks down upon the village spire:
For even here, where I and you
Have lived and loved alone so long,
Each morn my sleep was broken thro'
By some wild skylark's matin song.

And oft I heard the tender dove
In firry woodlands making moan;
But ere I saw your eyes, my love,
I had no motion of my own.
For scarce my life with fancy play'd
Before I dream'd that pleasant dream—
Still hither thither idly sway'd
Like those long mosses in the stream.

Or from the bridge I lean'd to hear
The milldam rushing down with noise,
And see the minnows everywhere
In crystal eddies glance and poise,
The tall flag-flowers when they sprung
Below the range of stepping-stones,
Or those three chestnuts near, that hung
In masses thick with milky cones.

But, Alice, what an hour was that,
When after roving in the woods
('Twas April then), I came and sat
Below the chestnuts, when their buds
Were glistening to the breezy blue;
And on the slope, an absent fool,
I cast me down, nor thought of you,
But angled in the higher pool.

A love-song I had somewhere read,
An echo from a measured strain,
Beat time to nothing in my head
From some odd corner of the brain.
It haunted me, the morning long,
With weary sameness in the rhymes,
The phantom of a silent song,
That went and came a thousand times.

Then leapt a trout. In lazy mood
I watch'd the little circles die;
They past into the level flood,
And there a vision caught my eye;
The reflex of a beauteous form,
A glowing arm, a gleaming neck,
As when a sunbeam wavers warm
Within the dark and dimpled beck.

For you remember, you had set,
That morning, on the casement-edge
A long green box of mignonette,
And you were leaning from the ledge:
And when I raised my eyes, above
They met with two so full and bright—
Such eyes! I swear to you, my love,
That these have never lost their light.

I loved, and love dispell'd the fear
That I should die an early death:
For love possess'd the atmosphere,
And fill'd the breast with purer breath.
My mother thought, What ails the boy?
For I was alter'd, and began
To move about the house with joy,
And with the certain step of man.

I loved the brimming wave that swam
Thro' quiet meadows round the mill,
The sleepy pool above the dam,
The pool beneath it never still,
The meal-sacks on the whiten'd floor,
The dark round of the dripping wheel,
The very air about the door
Made misty with the floating meal.

And oft in ramblings on the wold,
When April nights began to blow,
And April's crescent glimmer'd cold,
I saw the village lights below;
I knew your taper far away,
And full at heart of trembling hope,
From off the wold I came, and lay
Upon the freshly-flower'd slope.

The deep brook groan'd beneath the mill;
And 'by that lamp,' I thought, 'she sits!'
The white chalk-quarry from the hill
Gleam'd to the flying moon by fits.
'O that I were beside her now!
O will she answer if I call?
O would she give me vow for vow,
Sweet Alice, if I told her all?

Sometimes I saw you sit and spin;
And, in the pauses of the wind,
Sometimes I heard you sing within;
Sometimes your shadow cross'd the blind.
At last you rose and moved the light,
And the long shadow of the chair
Flitted across into the night,
And all the casement darken'd there.

But when at last I dared to speak,
The lanes, you know, were white with may,
Your ripe lips moved not, but your cheek
Flush'd like the coming of the day;
And so it was—half-sly, half-shy,
You would, and would not, little one!
Although I pleaded tenderly,
And you and I were all alone.

And slowly was my mother brought
To yield consent to my desire:
She wish'd me happy, but she thought
I might have look'd a little higher;
And I was young—too young to wed:
'Yet must I love her for your sake;
Go fetch your Alice here,' she said:
Her eyelid quiver'd as she spake.

And down I went to fetch my bride:
But, Alice, you were ill at ease;
This dress and that by turns you tried,
Too fearful that you should not please.
I loved you better for your fears,
I knew you could not look but well;
And dews, that would have fall'n in tears,
I kiss'd away before they fell.

I watch'd the little flutterings,
The doubt my mother would not see;
She spoke at large of many things,
And at the last she spoke of me;
And turning look'd upon your face,
As near this door you sat apart,
And rose, and, with a silent grace
Approaching, press'd you heart to heart.

Ah, well—but sing the foolish song
I gave you, Alice, on the day
When, arm in arm, we went along,
A pensive pair, and you were gay
With bridal flowers—that I may seem,
As in the nights of old, to lie
Beside the mill-wheel in the stream,
While those full chestnuts whisper by.

It is the miller's daughter,
And she is grown so dear, so dear,
That I would be the jewel
That trembles in her ear:
For hid in ringlets day and night,
I'd touch her neck so warm and white.

And I would be the girdle
About her dainty dainty waist,
And her heart would beat against me,
In sorrow and in rest:
And I should know if it beat right,
I'd clasp it round so close and tight.

And I would be the necklace,
And all day long to fall and rise
Upon her balmy bosom,
With her laughter or her sighs,
And I would lie so light, so light,
I scarce should be unclasp'd at night.

A trifle, sweet! which true love spells—
True love interprets—right alone.
His light upon the letter dwells,
For all the spirit is his own.
So, if I waste words now, in truth
You must blame Love. His early rage
Had force to make me rhyme in youth,
And makes me talk too much in age.

And now those vivid hours are gone,
Like mine own life to me thou art,
Where Past and Present, wound in one,
Do make a garland for the heart:
So sing that other song I made,
Half-anger'd with my happy lot,
The day, when in the chestnut shade
I found the blue Forget-me-not.

Love that hath us in the net,
Can he pass, and we forget?
Many suns arise and set.
Many a chance the years beget.
Love the gift is Love the debt.
Even so.
Love is hurt with jar and fret.
Love is made a vague regret.
Eyes with idle tears are wet.
Idle habit links us yet.
What is love? for we forget:
Ah, no! no!

Look thro' mine eyes with thine. True wife,
Round my true heart thine arms entwine
My other dearer life in life,
Look thro' my very soul with thine!
Untouch'd with any shade of years,
May those kind eyes forever dwell!
They have not shed a many tears,
Dear eyes, since first I knew them well.

Yet tears they shed: they had their part
Of sorrow: for when time was ripe,
The still affection of the heart
Became an outward breathing type,
That into stillness passed again,
And left a want unknown before;
Although the loss had brought us pain,
That loss but made us love the more,

With farther lookings on. The kiss,
The woven arms, seem but to be
Weak symbols of the settled bliss,
The comfort, I have found in thee:
But that God bless thee, dear—who wrought
Two spirits to one equal mind—
With blessings beyond hope or thought,
With blessings which no words can find.

Arise, and let us wander forth,
To yon old mill across the wolds;
For look, the sunset, south and north,
Winds all the vale in rosy folds,

And fires your narrow casement glass,
Touching the sullen pool below:
On the chalk-hill the bearded grass
Is dry and dewless. Let us go.

FATIMA.

O Love, Love, Love! O withering might!
O sun, that from thy noonday height
Shudderest when I strain my sight,
Throbbing thro' all thy heat and light,
Lo, falling from my constant mind,
Lo, parch'd and wither'd, deaf and blind,
I whirl like leaves in roaring wind.

Last night I wasted hateful hours
Below the city's eastern towers:
I thirsted for the brooks, the showers:
I roll'd among the tender flowers:
I crush'd them on my breast, my mouth;
I look'd athwart the burning drouth
Of that long desert to the south.

Last night, when some one spoke his name,
From my swift blood that went and came
A thousand little shafts of flame
Were shiver'd in my narrow frame.
O Love, O fire! once he drew
With one long kiss my whole soul thro'
My lips, as sunlight drinketh dew.

Before he mounts the hill, I know
He cometh quickly: from below
Sweet gales, as from deep gardens, blow
Before him, striking on my brow.
In my dry brain my spirit soon,
Down-deepening from swoon to swoon,
Faints like a dazzled morning moon.

The wind sounds like a silver wire,
And from beyond the noon a fire
Is pour'd upon the hills, and nigher
The skies stoop down in their desire;
And, isled in sudden seas of light,
My heart, pierced thro' with fierce delight,
Bursts into blossom in his sight.

My whole soul waiting silently,
All naked in a sultry sky,
Droops blinded with his shining eye:
I *will* possess him or will die.
I will grow round him in his place,
Grow, live, die looking on his face,
Die, dying clasped in his embrace.

ŒNONE.

There lies a vale in Ida, lovelier
Than all the valleys of Ionian hills.
The swimming vapor slopes athwart the glen,
Puts forth an arm, and creeps from pine to pine,
And loiters, slowly drawn. On either hand
The lawns and meadow-ledges midway down
Hang rich in flowers, and far below them roars
The long brook falling thro' the clov'n ravine
In cataract after cataract to the sea.
Behind the valley topmost Gargarus
Stands up and takes the morning: but in front
The gorges, opening wide apart, reveal
Troas and Ilion's column'd citadel,
The crown of Troas.
Hither came at noon
Mournful Œnone, wandering forlorn
Of Paris, once her playmate on the hills.
Her cheek had lost the rose, and round her neck
Floated her hair or seem'd to float in rest.
She, leaning on a fragment twined with vine,
Sang to the stillness, till the mountain-shade
Sloped downward to her seat from the upper cliff.

"BELOW THE CITY'S EASTERN TOWERS." —*Page 14.*

'O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,
Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
For now the noonday quiet holds the hill:
The grasshopper is silent in the grass:
The lizard, with his shadow on the stone,
Rests like a shadow, and the winds are dead.
The purple flower droops: the golden bee
Is lily-cradled: I alone awake.
My eyes are full of tears, my heart of love,
My heart is breaking, and my eyes are dim,
And I am all aweary of my life.

'O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,
Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
Hear me, O Earth, hear me, O Hills, O Caves
That house the cold crown'd snake! O mountain brooks,
I am the daughter of a River-God,
Hear me, for I will speak, and build up all
My sorrow with my song, as yonder walls
Rose slowly to a music slowly breathed,
A cloud that gather'd shape: for it may be
That, while I speak of it, a little while
My heart may wander from its deeper woe.

'O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,
Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
I waited underneath the dawning hills,
Aloft the mountain lawn was dewy-dark,
And dewy-dark aloft the mountain pine:
Beautiful Paris, evil-hearted Paris,
Leading a jet-black goat white-horn'd, white-hooved,
Came up from reedy Simois all alone.

'O mother Ida, harken ere I die.
Far off the torrent call'd me from the cleft:
Far up the solitary morning smote
The streaks of virgin snow. With down-dropt eyes
I sat alone: white-breasted like a star
Fronting the dawn he moved; a leopard skin
Droop'd from his shoulder, but his sunny hair
Cluster'd about his temples like a God's:
And his cheek brighten'd as the foam-bow brightens
When the wind blows the foam, and all my heart
Went forth to embrace him coming ere he came.

'Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
He smiled, and opening out his milk-white palm
Disclosed a fruit of pure Hesperian gold,
That smelt ambrosially, and while I look'd
And listen'd, the full-flowing river of speech
Came down upon my heart.
'"My own Œnone,
Beautiful-brow'd Œnone, my own soul,
Behold this fruit, whose gleaming rind ingrav'n
'For the most fair,' would seem to award it thine,
As lovelier than whatever Oread haunt
The knolls of Ida, loveliest in all grace
Of movement, and the charm of married brows."

'Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
He prest the blossom of his lips to mine,
And added "This was cast upon the board,
When all the full-faced presence of the Gods
Ranged in the halls of Peleus; whereupon
Rose feud, with question unto whom 'twere due:

But light-foot Iris brought it yester-
eve,
Delivering, that to me, by common
voice
Elected umpire, Herè comes to-day,
Pallas and Aphroditè, claiming each
This meed of fairest. Thou, within
the cave
Behind yon whispering tuft of oldest
pine,
Mayst well behold them unbeheld,
unheard
Hear all, and see thy Paris judge of
Gods."

'Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
It was the deep midnoon: one silvery
cloud
Had lost his way between the piney
sides
Of this long glen. Then to the bower
they came,
Naked they came to that smooth-
swarded bower,
And at their feet the crocus brake like
fire,
Violet, amaracus, and asphodel,
Lotos and lilies: and a wind arose,
And overhead the wandering ivy and
vine,
This way and that, in many a wild
festoon
Ran riot, garlanding the gnarled
boughs
With bunch and berry and flower thro'
and thro'.

'O mother Ida, harken ere I die.
On the tree-tops a crested peacock lit,
And o'er him flow'd a golden cloud,
and lean'd
Upon him, slowly dropping fragrant
dew.
Then first I heard the voice of her, to
whom
Coming thro' Heaven, like a light
that grows
Larger and clearer, with one mind the
Gods
Rise up for reverence. She to Paris
made
Proffer of royal power, ample rule
Unquestion'd, overflowing revenue
Wherewith to embellish state, "from
many a vale
And river-sunder'd champaign clothed
with corn,
Or labor'd mine undrainable of ore.
Honor," she said, "and homage, tax
and toll,
From many an inland town and haven
large,
Mast-throng'd beneath her shadowing
citadel
In glassy bays among her tallest
towers."

'O mother Ida, harken ere I die.
Still she spake on and still she spake
of power,
"Which in all action is the end of
all;
Power fitted to the season; wisdom-
bred
And throned of wisdom—from all
neighbor crowns
Alliance and allegiance, till thy hand
Fail from the sceptre-staff. Such
boon from me,
From me, Heaven's Queen, Paris, to
thee king-born,
A shepherd all thy life but yet king-
born,
Should come most welcome, seeing
men, in power
Only, are likest gods, who have attain'd
Rest in a happy place and quiet seats
Above the thunder, with undying bliss
In knowledge of their own suprem-
acy."

'Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
She ceased, and Paris held the costly
fruit
Out at arm's-length, so much the
thought of power
Flatter'd his spirit; but Pallas where
she stood
Somewhat apart, her clear and bared
limbs
O'erthwarted with the brazen-headed
spear
Upon her pearly shoulder leaning
cold,
The while, above, her full and earnest
eye

Over her snow-cold breast and angry cheek
Kept watch, waiting decision, made reply.

"Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control,
These three alone lead life to sovereign power.
Yet not for power (power of herself
Would come uncall'd for) but to live by law,
Acting the law we live by without fear;
And, because right is right, to follow right
Were wisdom in the scorn of consequence."

'Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
Again she said: "I woo thee not with gifts.
Sequel of guerdon could not alter me
To fairer. Judge thou me by what I am,
So shalt thou find me fairest.
Yet, indeed,
If gazing on divinity disrobed
Thy mortal eyes are frail to judge of fair,
Unbias'd by self-profit, oh! rest thee sure
That I shall love thee well and cleave to thee,
So that my vigor, wedded to thy blood,
Shall strike within thy pulses, like a God's,
To push thee forward thro' a life of shocks,
Dangers, and deeds, until endurance grow
Sinew'd with action, and the full-grown will,
Circled thro' all experiences, pure law,
Commeasure perfect freedom."
'Here she ceas'd,
And Paris ponder'd, and I cried, "O Paris,
Give it to Pallas!" but he heard me not,
Or hearing would not hear me, woe is me!

'O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,
Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
Idalian Aphroditè beautiful,
Fresh as the foam, new-bathed in Paphian wells,
With rosy slender fingers backward drew
From her warm brows and bosom her deep hair
Ambrosial, golden round her lucid throat
And shoulder: from the violets her light foot
Shone rosy-white, and o'er her rounded form
Between the shadows of the vine-bunches
Floated the glowing sunlights, as she moved.

'Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die
She with a subtle smile in her mild eyes,
The herald of her triumph, drawing nigh
Half-whisper'd in his ear, "I promise thee
The fairest and most loving wife in Greece,"
She spoke and laugh'd: I shut my sight for fear:
But when I look'd, Paris had raised his arm,
And I beheld great Herè's angry eyes,
As she withdrew into the golden cloud,
And I was left alone within the bower;
And from that time to this I am alone,
And I shall be alone until I die.

'Yet, mother Ida, harken ere I die.
Fairest—why fairest wife? am I not fair?
My love hath told me so a thousand times.
Methinks I must be fair, for yesterday,
When I past by, a wild and wanton pard,
Eyed like the evening star, with playful tail
Crouch'd fawning in the weed. Most loving is she?

Ah me, my mountain shepherd, that my arms
Were wound about thee, and my hot lips prest
Close, close to thine in that quick-falling dew
Of fruitful kisses, thick as Autumn rains
Flash in the pools of whirling Simois.

'O mother, hear me yet before I die.
They came, they cut away my tallest pines,
My tall dark pines, that plumed the craggy ledge
High over the blue gorge, and all between
The snowy peak and snow-white cataract
Foster'd the callow eaglet—from beneath
Whose thick mysterious boughs in the dark morn
The panther's roar came muffled, while I sat
Low in the valley. Never, never more
Shall lone Œnone see the morning mist
Sweep thro' them; never see them overlaid
With narrow moon-lit slips of silver cloud,
Between the loud stream and the trembling stars.

'O mother, hear me yet before I die.
I wish that somewhere in the ruin'd folds,
Among the fragments tumbled from the glens,
Or the dry thickets, I could meet with her
The Abominable, that uninvited came
Into the fair Peleïan banquet-hall,
And cast the golden fruit upon the board,
And bred this change; that I might speak my mind,
And tell her to her face how much I hate
Her presence, hated both of Gods and men.

'O mother, hear me yet before I die.
Hath he not sworn his love a thousand times,
In this green valley, under this green hill,
Ev'n on this hand, and sitting on this stone?
Seal'd it with kisses? water'd it with tears?
O happy tears, and how unlike to these!
O happy Heaven, how canst thou see my face?
O happy earth, how canst thou bear my weight?
O death, death, death, thou ever-floating cloud,
There are enough unhappy on this earth,
Pass by the happy souls, that love to live:
I pray thee, pass before my light of life,
And shadow all my soul, that I may die.
Thou weighest heavy on the heart within,
Weigh heavy on my eyelids: let me die.

'O mother, hear me yet before I die.
I will not die alone, for fiery thoughts
Do shape themselves within me, more and more,
Whereof I catch the issue, as I hear
Dead sounds at night come from the inmost hills,
Like footsteps upon wool. I dimly see
My far-off doubtful purpose, as a mother
Conjectures of the features of her child
Ere it is born: her child!—a shudder comes
Across me: never child be born of me,
Unblest, to vex me with his father's eyes!

'O mother, hear me yet before I die.

Hear me, O earth. I will not die alone,
Lest their shrill happy laughter come to me
Walking the cold and starless road of Death
Uncomforted, leaving my ancient love
With the Greek woman. I will rise and go
Down into Troy, and ere the stars come forth
Talk with the wild Cassandra, for she says
A fire dances before her, and a sound
Rings ever in her ears of armed men.
What this may be I know not, but I know
That, wheresoe'er I am by night and day,
All earth and air seem only burning fire.'

THE SISTERS.

We were two daughters of one race:
She was the fairest in the face:
The wind is blowing in turret and tree.
They were together, and she fell;
Therefore revenge became me well.
O the Earl was fair to see!

She died: she went to burning flame:
She mix'd her ancient blood with shame.
The wind is howling in turret and tree.
Whole weeks and months, and early and late,
To win his love I lay in wait:
O the Earl was fair to see!

I made a feast; I bad him come;
I won his love, I brought him home.
The wind is roaring in turret and tree.
And after supper, on a bed,
Upon my lap he laid his head
O the Earl was fair to see!

I kiss'd his eyelids into rest:
His ruddy cheek upon my breast.
The wind is raging in turret and tree.
I hated him with the hate of hell,
But I loved his beauty passing well.
O the Earl was fair to see!

I rose up in the silent night:
I made my dagger sharp and bright.
The wind is raving in turret and tree.
As half-asleep his breath he drew,
Three times I stabb'd him thro' and thro'.
O the Earl was fair to see!

I curl'd and comb'd his comely head,
He look'd so grand when he was dead.
The wind is blowing in turret and tree.
I wrapt his body in the sheet,
And laid him at his mother's feet.
O the Earl was fair to see!

TO ——.

WITH THE FOLLOWING POEM.

I send you here a sort of allegory,
(For you will understand it) of a soul,
A sinful soul possess'd of many gifts,
A spacious garden full of flowering weeds,
A glorious Devil, large in heart and brain,
That did love Beauty only, (Beauty seen
In all varieties of mould and mind)
And Knowledge for its beauty; or if Good,
Good only for its beauty, seeing not
That Beauty, Good, and Knowledge, are three sisters
That doat upon each other, friends to man,
Living together under the same roof,
And never can be sunder'd without tears.
And he that shuts Love out, in turn shall be
Shut out from Love, and on her threshold lie

Howling in outer darkness. Not for this
Was common clay ta'en from the common earth
Moulded by God, and temper'd with the tears
Of angels to the perfect shape of man.

THE PALACE OF ART.

I BUILT my soul a lordly pleasure-house,
Wherein at ease for aye to dwell.
I said, 'O Soul, make merry and carouse,
Dear soul, for all is well.'

A huge crag-platform, smooth as burnish'd brass
I chose. The ranged ramparts bright
From level meadow-bases of deep grass
Suddenly scaled the light.

Thereon I built it firm. Of ledge or shelf
The rock rose clear, or winding stair.
My soul would live alone unto herself
In her high palace there.

And 'while the world runs round and round,' I said,
'Reign thou apart, a quiet king,
Still as, while Saturn whirls, his stedfast shade
Sleeps on his luminous ring.'
To which my soul made answer readily:
'Trust me, in bliss I shall abide
In this great mansion, that is built for me,
So royal-rich and wide.'

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Four courts I made, East, West and South and North,
In each a squared lawn, wherefrom
The golden gorge of dragons spouted forth
A flood of fountain-foam.

And round the cool green courts there ran a row
Of cloisters, branch'd like mighty woods,
Echoing all night to that sonorous flow
Of spouted fountain-floods.

And round the roofs a gilded gallery
That lent broad verge to distant lands,
Far as the wild swan wings, to where the sky
Dipt down to sea and sands.

From those four jets four currents in one swell
Across the mountain stream'd below
In misty folds, that floating as they fell
Lit up a torrent-bow.

And high on every peak a statue seem'd
To hang on tiptoe, tossing up
A cloud of incense of all odor steam'd
From out a golden cup.

So that she thought, 'And who shall gaze upon
My palace with unblinded eyes,
While this great bow will waver in the sun,
And that sweet incense rise?'

For that sweet incense rose and never fail'd,
And, while day sank or mounted higher,
The light aërial gallery, golden-rail'd,
Burnt like a fringe of fire.

Likewise the deep-set windows, stain'd and traced,
Would seem slow-flaming crimson fires
From shadow'd grots of arches interlaced,
And tipt with frost-like spires.

"WITH DOWN-DROPT EYES I SAT ALONE."—*Page 15.*

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Full of long-sounding corridors it was,
That over-vaulted grateful gloom,
Thro' which the livelong day my soul did pass,
Well-pleased, from room to room.

Full of great rooms and small the palace stood,
All various, each a perfect whole
From living Nature, fit for every mood
And change of my still soul.

For some were hung with arras green and blue,
Showing a gaudy summer-morn,
Where with puff'd cheek the belted hunter blew
His wreathed bugle-horn.

One seem'd all dark and red—a tract of sand,
And some one pacing there alone,
Who paced for ever in a glimmering land,
Lit with a low large moon.

One show'd an iron coast and angry waves.
You seem'd to hear them climb and fall
And roar rock-thwarted under bellowing caves,
Beneath the windy wall.

And one, a full-fed river winding slow
By herds upon an endless plain,
The ragged rims of thunder brooding low,
With shadow-streaks of rain.

And one, the reapers at their sultry toil.
In front they bound the sheaves. Behind
Were realms of upland, prodigal in oil,
And hoary to the wind.

And one a foreground black with stones and slags,
Beyond, a line of heights, and higher
All barr'd with long white cloud the scornful crags,
And highest, snow and fire.

And one, an English home—gray twilight pour'd
On dewy pastures, dewy trees,
Softer than sleep—all things in order stored,
A haunt of ancient Peace.

Nor these alone, but every landscape fair,
As fit for every mood of mind,
Or gay, or grave, or sweet, or stern, was there
Not less than truth design'd.

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Or the maid-mother by a crucifix,
In tracts of pasture sunny-warm,
Beneath branch-work of costly sardonyx
Sat smiling, babe in arm.

Or in a clear-wall'd city on the sea,
Near gilded organ-pipes, her hair
Wound with white roses, slept St. Cecily;
An angel look'd at her.

Or thronging all one porch of Paradise
A group of Houris bow'd to see
The dying Islamite, with hands and eyes
That said, We wait for thee.

Or mythic Uther's deeply-wounded son
In some fair space of sloping greens
Lay, dozing in the vale of Avalon,
And watch'd by weeping queens.

Or hollowing one hand against his ear,
To list a foot-fall, ere he saw
The wood-nymph, stay'd the Ausonian king to hear
Of wisdom and of law.

Or over hills with peaky tops engrail'd,
And many a tract of palm and rice,
The throne of Indian Cama slowly sail'd
A summer fann'd with spice.

Or sweet Europa's mantle blew unclasp'd,
From off her shoulder backward borne:
From one hand droop'd a crocus: one hand grasp'd
The mild bull's golden horn.

Or else flush'd Ganymede, his rosy thigh
Half-buried in the Eagle's down,
Sole as a flying star shot thro' the sky
Above the pillar'd town.

Nor these alone: but every legend fair
Which the supreme Caucasian mind
Carved out of Nature for itself, was there,
Not less than life, design'd.

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Then in the towers I placed great bells that swung,
Moved of themselves, with silver sound;
And with choice paintings of wise men I hung
The royal dais round.

For there was Milton like a seraph strong,
Beside him Shakespeare bland and mild;
And there the world-worn Dante grasp'd his song,
And somewhat grimly smiled

And there the Ionian father of the rest;
A million wrinkles carved his skin;
A hundred winters snow'd upon his breast,
From cheek and throat and chin.

Above, the fair hall-ceiling stately-set
Many an arch high up did lift,
And angels rising and descending met
With interchange of gift.

Below was all mosaic choicely plann'd
With cycles of the human tale
Of this wide world, the times of every land
So wrought, they will not fail.

The people here, a beast of burden slow,
Toil'd onward, prick'd with goads and stings;
Here play'd, a tiger, rolling to and fro
The heads and crowns of kings;

Here rose, an athlete, strong to break or bind
All force in bonds that might endure,
And here once more like some sick man declined,
And trusted any cure.

But over these she trod: and those great bells
Began to chime. She took her throne:
She sat betwixt the shining Oriels,
To sing her songs alone.

And thro' the topmost Oriels' colored flame
Two godlike faces gazed below;
Plato the wise, and large-brow'd Verulam,
The first of those who know.

And all those names, that in their motion were
Full-welling fountain-heads of change,
Betwixt the slender shafts were blazon'd fair
In diverse raiment strange:

Thro' which the lights, rose, amber, emerald, blue,
Flush'd in her temples and her eyes,
And from her lips, as morn from Memnon, drew
Rivers of melodies.

No nightingale delighteth to prolong
Her low preamble all alone,
More than my soul to hear her echo'd song
Throb thro' the ribbed stone;

Singing and murmuring in her feastful mirth,
Joying to feel herself alive,
Lord over Nature, Lord of the visible earth,
Lord of the senses five;

Communing with herself: 'All these are mine,
And let the world have peace or wars,
'Tis one to me.' She—when young night divine
Crown'd dying day with stars,

Making sweet close of his delicious toils—
Lit light in wreaths and anadems,
And pure quintessences of precious oils
In hollow'd moons of gems,

To mimic heaven; and clapt her hands and cried,
'I marvel if my still delight
In this great house so royal-rich, and wide,
Be flatter'd to the height.

'O all things fair to sate my various eyes!
O shapes and hues that please me well!
O silent faces of the Great and Wise,
My Gods, with whom I dwell!

'O God-like isolation which art mine,
I can but count thee perfect gain,
What time I watch the darkening droves of swine
That range on yonder plain.

'In filthy sloughs they roll a prurient skin,
They graze and wallow, breed and sleep;
And oft some brainless devil enters in,
And drives them to the deep.'

Then of the moral instinct would she prate
And of the rising from the dead,
As hers by right of full-accomplish'd Fate;
And at the last she said:

'I take possession of man's mind and deed.
I care not what the sects may brawl.
I sit as God holding no form of creed,
But contemplating all.'

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Full oft the riddle of the painful earth
Flash'd thro' her as she sat alone,
Yet not the less held she her solemn mirth,
And intellectual throne.

And so she throve and prosper'd: so three years
She prosper'd: on the fourth she fell,
Like Herod, when the shout was in his ears,
Struck thro' with pangs of hell.

Lest she should fail and perish utterly,
God, before whom ever lie bare
The abysmal deeps of Personality,
Plagued her with sore despair.

When she would think, where'er she turn'd her sight
The airy hand confusion wrought,
Wrote, 'Mene, mene,' and divided quite
The kingdom of her thought.

Deep dread and loathing of her solitude
Fell on her, from which mood was born
Scorn of herself; again, from out that mood
Laughter at her self-scorn.

What! is not this my place of strength,' she said,
'My spacious mansion built for me,
Whereof the strong foundation-stones were laid
Since my first memory?'

But in dark corners of her palace stood
Uncertain shapes; and unawares
On white-eyed phantasms weeping tears of blood,
And horrible nightmares,

And hollow shades enclosing hearts of flame,
And, with dim fretted foreheads all,
On corpses three-months-old at noon she came,
That stood against the wall.

A spot of dull stagnation, without light
Or power of movement, seem'd my soul,
'Mid onward-sloping motions infinite
Making for one sure goal.

A still salt pool, lock'd in with bars of sand,
Left on the shore; that hears all night
The plunging seas draw backward from the land
Their moon-led waters white.

A star that with the choral starry dance
Join'd not, but stood, and standing saw
The hollow orb of moving Circumstance
Roll'd round by one fix'd law.

Back on herself her serpent pride had curl'd.
'No voice,' she shriek'd in that lone hall,
'No voice breaks thro' the stillness of this world:
One deep, deep silence all!'

She, mouldering with the dull earth's mouldering sod,
Inwrapt tenfold in slothful shame,
Lay there exiled from eternal God,
Lost to her place and name;

And death and life she hated equally,
And nothing saw, for her despair,
But dreadful time, dreadful eternity,
No comfort anywhere;

Remaining utterly confused with fears,
And ever worse with growing time,
And ever unrelieved by dismal tears,
And all alone in crime:

Shut up as in a crumbling tomb, girt round
With blackness as a solid wall,
Far off she seem'd to hear the dully sound
Of human footsteps fall.

As in strange lands a traveller walking slow,
In doubt and great perplexity,
A little before moon-rise hears the low
Moan of an unknown sea;

And knows not if it be thunder, or a sound
Of rocks thrown down, or one deep cry
Of great wild beasts; then thinketh, 'I have found
A new land, but I die.'

She howl'd aloud, 'I am on fire within.
There comes no murmur of reply.
What is it that will take away my sin,
And save me lest I die?'

So when four years were wholly finished,
She threw her royal robes away.
'Make me a cottage in the vale,' she said,
'Where I may mourn and pray.

Yet pull not down my palace towers, that are
So lightly, beautifully built:

"ARE THERE NO BEGGARS AT YOUR GATE?"—*Page 25.*

Perchance I may return with others there
When I have purged my guilt.'

LADY CLARA VERE DE VERE.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,
Of me you shall not win renown:
You thought to break a country heart
For pastime, ere you went to town.
At me you smiled, but unbeguiled
I saw the snare, and I retired:
The daughter of a hundred Earls,
You are not one to be desired.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,
I know you proud to bear your name,
Your pride is yet no mate for mine,
Too proud to care from whence I came.
Nor would I break for your sweet sake
A heart that doats on truer charms.
A simple maiden in her flower
Is worth a hundred coats-of-arms.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,
Some meeker pupil you must find,
For were you queen of all that is,
I could not stoop to such a mind.
You sought to prove how I could love,
And my disdain is my reply.
The lion on your old stone gates
Is not more cold to you than I.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,
You put strange memories in my head.
Not thrice your branching limes have blown
Since I beheld young Laurence dead.
Oh your sweet eyes, your low replies:
A great enchantress you may be;
But there was that across his throat
Which you had hardly cared to see.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,
When thus he met his mother's view,
She had the passions of her kind,
She spake some certain truths of you.
Indeed I heard one bitter word
That scarce is fit for you to hear;
Her manners had not that repose
Which stamps the caste of Vere de Vere.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,
There stands a spectre in your hall:
The guilt of blood is at your door:
You changed a wholesome heart to gall.
You held your course without remorse,
To make him trust his modest worth,
And, last, you fix'd a vacant stare,
And slew him with your noble birth.

Trust me, Clara Vere de Vere,
From yon blue heavens above us bent
The gardener Adam and his wife
Smile at the claims of long descent.
Howe'er it be, it seems to me,
'Tis only noble to be good.
Kind hearts are more than coronets,
And simple faith than Norman blood.

I know you, Clara Vere de Vere,
You pine among your halls and towers:
The languid light of your proud eyes
Is wearied of the rolling hours.
In glowing health, with boundless wealth,
But sickening of a vague disease,
You know so ill to deal with time,
You needs must play such pranks as these.

Clara, Clara Vere de Vere,
If time be heavy on your hands,
Are there no beggars at your gate,
Nor any poor about your lands?
Oh! teach the orphan-boy to read,
Or teach the orphan-girl to sew,
Pray Heaven for a human heart,
And let the foolish yeoman go.

THE MAY QUEEN.

You must wake and call me early, call me early, mother dear;
To-morrow 'ill be the happiest time of all the glad New-year;
Of all the glad New-year, mother, the maddest merriest day;
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

There's many a black black eye, they say, but none so bright as mine;
There's Margaret and Mary, there's Kate and Caroline:
But none so fair as little Alice in all the land they say,
So I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

I sleep so sound all night, mother, that I shall never wake,
If you do not call me loud when the day begins to break:
But I must gather knots of flowers, and buds and garlands gay,
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

As I came up the valley whom think ye should I see,
But Robin leaning on the bridge beneath the hazel-tree?
He thought of that sharp look, mother, I gave him yesterday,
But I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

He thought I was a ghost, mother, for I was all in white,
And I ran by him without speaking, like a flash of light.
They call me cruel-hearted, but I care not what they say,
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

They say he's dying all for love, but that can never be:
They say his heart is breaking, mother—what is that to me?
There's many a bolder lad 'ill woo me any summer day,
And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

Little Effie shall go with me to-morrow to the green,
And you'll be there, too, mother, to see me made the Queen;
For the shepherd lads on every side 'ill come from far away,
And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

The honeysuckle round the porch has wov'n its wavy bowers,
And by the meadow-trenches blow the faint sweet cuckoo-flowers;
And the wild marsh-marigold shines like fire in swamps and hollows gray,
And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

The night-winds come and go, mother, upon the meadow-grass,
And the happy stars above them seem to brighten as they pass;
There will not be a drop of rain the whole of the livelong day,
And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

All the valley, mother, 'ill be fresh and green and still,
And the cowslip and the crowfoot are over all the hill,
And the rivulet in the flowery dale 'ill merrily glance and play,
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

So you must wake and call me early, call me early, mother dear,
To-morrow 'ill be the happiest time of all the glad New-year:
To-morrow 'ill be of all the year the maddest merriest day,
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

NEW-YEAR'S EVE.

If you're waking call me early, call me early, mother dear,
For I would see the sun rise upon the glad New-year.
It is the last New-year that I shall ever see,
Then you may lay me low i' the mould and think no more of me.

To-night I saw the sun set: he set and left behind
The good old year, the dear old time, and all my peace of mind;
And the New-year's coming up, mother, but I shall never see
The blossom on the blackthorn, the leaf upon the tree.

Last May we made a crown of flowers: we had a merry day;
Beneath the hawthorn on the green they made me Queen of May;
And we danced about the may-pole and in the hazel copse,
Till Charles's Wain came out above the tall white chimney-tops.

There's not a flower on all the hills: the frost is on the pane:
I only wish to live till the snowdrops come again:
I wish the snow would melt and the sun come out on high:
I long to see a flower so before the day I die.

The building rook 'll caw from the windy tall elm-tree,
And the tufted plover pipe along the fallow lea,
And the swallow 'ill come back again with summer o'er the wave,
But I shall lie alone, mother, within the mouldering grave.

Upon the chancel-casement, and upon that grave of mine,
In the early early morning the summer sun 'ill shine,
Before the red cock crows from the farm upon the hill,
When you are warm-asleep, mother, and all the world is still.

When the flowers come again, mother, beneath the waning light
You'll never see me more in the long gray fields at night;
When from the dry dark wold the summer airs blow cool
On the oat-grass and the sword-grass, and the bulrush in the pool.

You'll bury me, my mother, just beneath the hawthorn shade,
And you'll come sometimes and see me where I am lowly laid.
I shall not forget you, mother, I shall hear you when you pass,
With your feet above my head in the long and pleasant grass.

I have been wild and wayward, but you'll forgive me now;
You'll kiss me, my own mother, and forgive me ere I go;
Nay, nay, you must not weep, nor let your grief be wild,
You should not fret for me, mother, you have another child.

If I can I'll come again, mother, from out my resting-place;
Tho' you'll not see me, mother, I shall look upon your face;
Tho' I cannot speak a word, I shall harken what you say,
And be often, often with you when you think I'm far away

Goodnight, goodnight, when I have said goodnight forevermore,
And you see me carried out from the threshold of the door;
Don't let Effie come to see me till my grave be growing green:
She'll be a better child to you than ever I have been.

She'll find my garden-tools upon the granary floor:
Let her take 'em: they are hers: I shall never garden more:
But tell her, when I'm gone, to train the rosebush that I set
About the parlor-window and the box of mignonette.

Goodnight, sweet mother: call me before the day is born.
All night I lie awake, but I fall asleep at morn;
But I would see the sun rise upon the glad New-year,
So, if you're waking, call me, call me early, mother dear.

CONCLUSION.

I THOUGHT to pass away before, and yet alive I am;
And in the fields all round I hear the bleating of the lamb.
How sadly, I remember, rose the morning of the year!
To die before the snowdrop came, and now the violet's here.

O sweet is the new violet, that comes beneath the skies,
And sweeter is the young lamb's voice to me that cannot rise,
And sweet is all the land about, and all the flowers that blow,
And sweeter far is death than life to me that long to go.

It seem'd so hard at first, mother, to leave the blessed sun,
And now it seems as hard to stay, and yet His will be done!
But still I think it can't be long before I find release;
And that good man, the clergyman, has told me words of peace.

O blessings on his kindly voice and on his silver hair!
And blessings on his whole life long, until he meet me there!
O blessings on his kindly heart and on his silver head!
A thousand times I blest him, as he knelt beside my bed.

He taught me all the mercy, for he show'd me all the sin.
Now, tho' my lamp was lighted late, there's One will let me in:
Nor would I now be well, mother, again if that could be,
For my desire is but to pass to Him that died for me.

I did not hear the dog howl, mother, or the death-watch beat,
There came a sweeter token when the night and morning meet:
But sit beside my bed, mother, and put your hand in mine,
And Effie on the other side, and I will tell the sign.

—*Page 29.*

All in the wild March-morning I heard the angels call;
It was when the moon was setting, and the dark was over all;
The trees began to whisper, and the wind began to roll,
And in the wild March-morning I heard them call my soul.

For lying broad awake I thought of you and Effie dear;
I saw you sitting in the house, and I no longer here;
With all my strength I pray'd for both, and so I felt resign'd
And up the valley came a swell of music on the wind.

I thought that it was fancy, and I listen'd in my bed,
And then did something speak to me—I know not what was said;
For great delight and shuddering took hold of all my mind,
And up the valley came again the music on the wind.

But you were sleeping; and I said, 'It's not for them: it's mine.'
And if it come three times, I thought, I take it for a sign.
And once again it came, and close beside the window-bars,
Then seem'd to go right up to Heaven and die among the stars.

So now I think my time is near. I trust it is. I know
The blessed music went that way my soul will have to go.
And for myself, indeed, I care not if I go to-day,
But, Effie, you must comfort *her* when I am past away.

And say to Robin a kind word, and tell him not to fret;
There's many a worthier than I, would make him happy yet.
If I had lived—I cannot tell—I might have been his wife;
But all these things have ceased to be, with my desire of life.

O look! the sun begins to rise, the heavens are in a glow;
He shines upon a hundred fields, and all of them I know.
And there I move no longer now, and there his light may shine—
Wild flowers in the valley for other hands than mine.

O sweet and strange it seems to me, that ere this day is done
The voice, that now is speaking, may be beyond the sun—
For ever and for ever with those just souls and true—
And what is life, that we should moan? why make we such ado?

For ever and for ever, all in a blessed home—
And there to wait a little while till you and Effie come—
To lie within the light of God, as I lie upon your breast—
And the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest.

THE LOTOS-EATERS.

'COURAGE!' he said, and pointed toward the land,
'This mounting wave will roll us shoreward soon.'
In the afternoon they came unto a land
In which it seemed always afternoon.
All round the coast the languid air did swoon,
Breathing like one that hath a weary dream.
Full-faced above the valley stood the moon;

And like a downward smoke, the slender stream
Along the cliff to fall and pause and fall did seem.

A land of streams! some, like a downward smoke,
Slow-dropping veils of thinnest lawn, did go;
And some thro' wavering lights and shadows broke,
Rolling a slumbrous sheet of foam below.
They saw the gleaming river seaward flow
From the inner land: far off, three mountain-tops,
Three silent pinnacles of aged snow,
Stood sunset-flush'd: and, dew'd with showery drops,
Up-clomb the shadowy pine above the woven copse.

The charmed sunset linger'd low adown
In the red West: thro' mountain clefts the dale
Was seen far inland, and the yellow down
Border'd with palm, and many a winding vale
And meadow, set with slender galingale;
A land where all things always seem'd the same!
And round about the keel with faces pale,
Dark faces pale against that rosy flame,
The mild-eyed melancholy Lotos-eaters came.
Branches they bore of that enchanted stem,
Laden with flower and fruit, whereof they gave
To each, but whoso did receive of them,
And taste, to him the gushing of the wave
Far far away did seem to mourn and rave
On alien shores; and if his fellow spake,
His voice was thin, as voices from the grave;
And deep-asleep he seem'd, yet all awake,
And music in his ears his beating heart did make.

They sat them down upon the yellow sand,
Between the sun and moon upon the shore;
And sweet it was to dream of Fatherland,
Of child, and wife, and slave; but evermore
Most weary seem'd the sea, weary the oar,
Weary the wandering fields of barren foam.
Then some one said, 'We will return no more;'
And all at once they sang, 'Our island home
Is far beyond the wave; we will no longer roam.'

CHORIC SONG.

I.

THERE is sweet music here that softer falls
Than petals from blown roses on the grass,
Or night-dews on still waters between walls
Of shadowy granite, in a gleaming pass;
Music that gentlier on the spirit lies,
Than tir'd eyelids upon tir'd eyes;
Music that brings sweet sleep down from the blissful skies.
Here are cool mosses deep,
And thro' the moss the ivies creep,
And in the stream the long-leaved flowers weep,
And from the craggy ledge the poppy hangs in sleep.

II.

Why are we weigh'd upon with heaviness,

And utterly consumed with sharp distress,
While all things else have rest from weariness?
All things have rest: why should we toil alone,
We only toil, who are the first of things,
And make perpetual moan,
Still from one sorrow to another thrown:
Nor ever fold our wings,
And cease from wanderings,
Nor steep our brows in slumber's holy balm;
Nor harken what the inner spirit sings,
'There is no joy but calm!'
Why should we only toil, the roof and crown of things?

III.

Lo! in the middle of the wood,
The folded leaf is woo'd from out the bud
With winds upon the branch, and there
Grows green and broad, and takes no care,
Sun-steep'd at noon, and in the moon
Nightly dew-fed; and turning yellow
Falls, and floats adown the air.
Lo! sweeten'd with the summer light,
The full-juiced apple, waxing over-mellow,
Drops in a silent autumn night.
All its allotted length of days,
The flower ripens in its place,
Ripens and fades, and falls, and hath no toil,
Fast-rooted in the fruitful soil.

IV.

Hateful is the dark-blue sky,
Vaulted o'er the dark-blue sea.
Death is the end of life; ah, why
Should life all labor be?
Let us alone. Time driveth onward fast,
And in a little while our lips are dumb.
Let us alone. What is it that will last?
All things are taken from us, and become
Portions and parcels of the dreadful Past.
Let us alone. What pleasure can we have
To war with evil? Is there any peace
In ever climbing up the climbing wave?
All things have rest, and ripen toward the grave
In silence; ripen, fall and cease:
Give us long rest or death, dark death, or dreamful ease.

V.

How sweet it were, hearing the downward stream,
With half-shut eyes ever to seem
Falling asleep in a half-dream!
To dream and dream, like yonder amber light,
Which will not leave the myrrh-bush on the height;
To hear each other's whisper'd speech;
Eating the Lotos day by day,
To watch the crisping ripples on the beach,
And tender curving lines of creamy spray;
To lend our hearts and spirits wholly
To the influence of mild-minded melancholy;
To muse and brood and live again in memory,
With those old faces of our infancy
Heap'd over with a mound of grass,
Two handfuls of white dust, shut in an urn of brass!

VI.

Dear is the memory of our wedded lives,
And dear the last embraces of our wives
And their warm tears: but all hath suffer'd change:
For surely now our household hearths are cold:
Our sons inherit us: our looks are strange:
And we should come like ghosts to trouble joy.
Or else the island princes over-bold

Have eat our substance, and the minstrel sings
Before them of the ten years' war in Troy,
And our great deeds, as half-forgotten things.
Is there confusion in the little isle?
Let what is broken so remain.
The Gods are hard to reconcile:
'Tis hard to settle order once again.
There *is* confusion worse than death,
Trouble on trouble, pain on pain,
Long labor unto aged breath,
Sore task to hearts worn out by many wars
And eyes grown dim with gazing on the pilot-stars.

VII.

But, propt on beds of amaranth and moly,
How sweet (while warm airs lull us, blowing lowly)
With half-dropt eyelid still,
Beneath a heaven dark and holy,
To watch the long bright river drawing slowly
His waters from the purple hill—
To hear the dewy echoes calling
From cave to cave thro' the thick-twined vine—
To watch the emerald-color'd water falling
Thro' many a wov'n acanthus-wreath divine!
Only to hear and see the far-off sparkling brine,
Only to hear were sweet, stretch'd out beneath the pine.

VIII.

The Lotos blooms below the barren peak:
The Lotos blows by every winding creek:
All day the wind breathes low with mellower tone:
Thro' every hollow cave and alley lone
Round and round the spicy downs the yellow Lotos-dust is blown.

We have had enough of action, and of motion we,
Roll'd to starboard, roll'd to larboard, when the surge was seething free,
Where the wallowing monster spouted his foam-fountains in the sea.
Let us swear an oath, and keep it with an equal mind,
In the hollow Lotos-land to live and lie reclined
On the hills like Gods together, careless of mankind.
For they lie beside their nectar, and the bolts are hurl'd
Far below them in the valleys, and the clouds are lightly curl'd
Round their golden houses, girdled with the gleaming world:
Where they smile in secret, looking over wasted lands,
Blight and famine, plague and earthquake, roaring deeps and fiery sands,
Clanging fights, and flaming towns, and sinking ships, and praying hands.
But they smile, they find a music centred in a doleful song
Steaming up, a lamentation and an ancient tale of wrong,
Like a tale of little meaning tho' the words are strong;
Chanted from an ill-used race of men that cleave the soil,
Sow the seed, and reap the harvest with enduring toil,
Storing yearly little dues of wheat, and wine and oil;
Till they perish and they suffer—some, 'tis whisper'd—down in hell
Suffer endless anguish, others in Elysian valleys dwell,
Resting weary limbs at last on beds of asphodel.
Surely, surely, slumber is more sweet than toil, the shore
Than labor in the deep mid-ocean, wind and wave and oar;
Oh rest ye, brother mariners, we will not wander more.

A DREAM OF FAIR WOMEN.

I READ, before my eyelids dropt their shade,
'*The Legend of Good Women*,' long ago
Sung by the morning star of song, who made
His music heard below;

Dan Chaucer, the first warbler, whose sweet breath
Preluded those melodious bursts that fill
The spacious times of great Elizabeth
With sounds that echo still.

And, for a while, the knowledge of his art
Held me above the subject, as strong gales
Hold swollen clouds from raining, tho' my heart,
Brimful of those wild tales,

Charged both mine eyes with tears. In every land
I saw, wherever light illumineth,
Beauty and anguish walking hand in hand
The downward slope to death.

Those far-renowned brides of ancient song
Peopled the hollow dark, like burning stars,
And I heard sounds of insult, shame, and wrong,
And trumpets blown for wars;

And clattering flints batter'd with clanging hoofs;
And I saw crowds in column'd sanctuaries;
And forms that pass'd at windows and on roofs
Of marble palaces;

Corpses across the threshold: heroes tall
Dislodging pinnacle and parapet
Upon the tortoise creeping to the wall;
Lances in ambush set;

And high shrine-doors burst thro' with heated blasts
That run before the fluttering tongues of fire;
White surf wind-scatter'd over sails and masts,
And ever climbing higher;

Squadrons and squares of men in brazen plates,
Scaffolds, still sheets of water, divers woes,
Ranges of glimmering vaults with iron grates,
And hush'd seraglios.

So shape chased shape as swift as, when to land
Bluster the winds and tides the self-same way,
Crisp foam-flakes scud along the level sand,
Torn from the fringe of spray.

I started once, or seem'd to start in pain,
Resolved on noble things, and strove to speak,
As when a great thought strikes along the brain,
And flushes all the cheek.

And once my arm was lifted to hew down
A cavalier from off his saddle-bow,
That bore a lady from a leaguer'd town;
And then, I know now not how,

All those sharp fancies, by down-lapsing thought
Stream'd onward, lost their edges, and did creep
Roll'd on each other, rounded, smooth'd, and brought
Into the gulfs of sleep.

At last methought that I had wander'd far
In an old wood: fresh-wash'd in coolest dew
The maiden splendors of the morning star
Shook in the stedfast blue.

Enormous elm-tree-boles did stoop and lean
Upon the dusky brushwood underneath
Their broad curved branches, fledged with clearest green,
New from its silken sheath.

The dim red morn had died, her journey done,
And with dead lips smiled at the twilight plain,
Half-fall'n across the threshold of the sun,
Never to rise again.

There was no motion in the dumb dead air,
Not any song of bird or sound of rill;
Gross darkness of the inner sepulchre
Is not so deadly still

As that wide forest. Growths of jasmine turn'd
Their humid arms festooning tree to tree,
And at the root thro' lush green grasses burn'd
The red anemone.

I knew the flowers, I knew the leaves, I knew
The tearful glimmer of the languid dawn
On those long, rank, dark wood-walks drench'd in dew,
Leaning from lawn to lawn.

The smell of violets, hidden in the green,
Pour'd back into my empty soul and frame
The times when I remember to have been
Joyful and free from blame.

And from within me a clear under-tone
Thrill'd thro' mine ears in that unblissful clime,
'Pass freely thro': the wood is all thine own,
Until the end of time.'

At length I saw a lady within call,
Stiller than chisell'd marble, standing there;
A daughter of the gods, divinely tall,
And most divinely fair.

Her loveliness with shame and with surprise
Froze my swift speech: she turning on my face
The star-like sorrows of immortal eyes,
Spoke slowly in her place.

'I had great beauty: ask thou not my name:
No one can be more wise than destiny.
Many drew swords and died. Where'er I came
I brought calamity.'

'No marvel, sovereign lady: in fair field
Myself for such a face had boldly died,'
I answer'd free; and turning I appeal'd
To one that stood beside.

But she, with sick and scornful looks averse,
To her full height her stately stature draws;
'My youth,' she said, 'was blasted with a curse:
This woman was the cause.

'I was cut off from hope in that sad place,
Which men call'd Aulis in those iron years:
My father held his hand upon his face;
I, blinded with my tears,

'Still strove to speak: my voice was thick with sighs
As in a dream. Dimly I could descry
The stern black-bearded kings with wolfish eyes,
Waiting to see me die.

'The high masts flicker'd as they lay afloat;

The crowds, the temples, waver'd, and the shore;
The bright death quiver'd at the victim's throat;
Touch'd; and I knew no more.'

Whereto the other with a downward brow:
'I would the white cold heavy-plunging foam,
Whirl'd by the wind, had roll'd me deep below,
Then when I left my home.'

Her slow full words sank thro' the silence drear,
As thunder-drops fall on a sleeping sea:
Sudden I heard a voice that cried, 'Come here,
That I may look on thee.'

I turning saw, throned on a flowery rise,
One sitting on a crimson scarf unroll'd;
A queen, with swarthy cheeks and bold black eyes,
Brow-bound with burning gold.

She, flashing forth a haughty smile, began:
'I govern'd men by change, and so I sway'd
All moods. 'Tis long since I have seen a man.
Once, like the moon, I made

'The ever-shifting currents of the blood
According to my humor ebb and flow.
I have no men to govern in this wood:
That makes my only woe.

'Nay—yet it chafes me that I could not bend
One will; nor tame and tutor with mine eye
That dull cold-blooded Cæsar. Prythee, friend,
Where is Mark Antony?

'The man, my lover, with whom I rode sublime
On Fortune's neck: we sat as God by God:
The Nilus would have risen before his time
And flooded at our nod.

'We drank the Libyan Sun to sleep, and lit
Lamps which out-burn'd Canopus. O my life
In Egypt! O the dalliance and the wit,
The flattery and the strife,

'And the wild kiss, when fresh from war's alarms,
My Hercules, my Roman Antony,
My mailed Bacchus leapt into my arms,
Contented there to die!

'And there he died: and when I heard my name
Sigh'd forth with life I would not brook my fear
Of the other: with a worm I balk'd his fame.
What else was left? look here!'

(With that she tore her robe apart, and half
The polish'd argent of her breast to sight
Laid bare. Thereto she pointed with a laugh,
Showing the aspick's bite.)

'I died a Queen. The Roman soldier found
Me lying dead, my crown about my brows,
A name for ever!—lying robed and crown'd,
Worthy a Roman spouse.'

Her warbling voice, a lyre of widest range
Struck by all passion, did fall down and glance
From tone to tone, and glided thro' all change
Of liveliest utterance.

When she made pause I knew not for delight;
Because with sudden motion from the ground
She raised her piercing orbs, and fill'd with light
The interval of sound.

Still with their fires Love tipt his keenest darts;
As once they drew into two burning rings
All beams of Love, melting the mighty hearts
Of captains and of kings.

Slowly my sense undazzled. Then I heard
A noise of some one coming thro' the lawn,
And singing clearer than the crested bird
That claps his wings at dawn.

'The torrent brooks of hallow'd Israel
From craggy hollows pouring, late and soon,
Sound all night long, in falling thro' the dell,
Far-heard beneath the moon.

'The balmy moon of blessed Israel
Floods all the deep-blue gloom with beams divine:
All night the splinter'd crags that wall the dell
With spires of silver shine.'

As one that museth where broad sunshine laves
The lawn by some cathedral, thro' the door
Hearing the holy organ rolling waves
Of sound on roof and floor

Within, and anthem sung, is charm'd and tied
To where he stands,—so stood I, when that flow
Of music left the lips of her that died
To save her father's vow;

The daughter of the warrior Gileadite,
A maiden pure; as when she went along
From Mizpeh's tower'd gate with welcome light,
With timbrel and with song.

My words leapt forth: 'Heaven heads the count of crimes
With that wild oath.' She render'd answer high:
'Not so, nor once alone; a thousand times
I would be born and die.

'Single I grew, like some green plant, whose root
Creeps to the garden water-pipes beneath,
Feeding the flower; but ere my flower to fruit
Changed, I was ripe for death.

'My God, my land, my father—these did move
Me from my bliss of life, that Nature gave,
Lower'd softly with a threefold cord of love
Down to a silent grave.

'And I went mourning, "No fair Hebrew boy
Shall smile away my maiden blame among
The Hebrew mothers"—emptied of all joy,
Leaving the dance and song,

'Leaving the olive-gardens far below,
Leaving the promise of my bridal bower,
The valleys of grape-loaded vines that glow
Beneath the battled tower.

'The light white cloud swam over us. Anon
We heard the lion roaring from his den;
We saw the large white stars rise one by one,
Or, from the darken'd glen,

'Saw God divide the night with flying flame,
And thunder on the everlasting hills.
I heard Him, for He spake, and grief became
A solemn scorn of ills.

'When the next moon was roll'd into the sky,
Strength came to me that equall'd my desire.
How beautiful a thing it was to die
For God and for my sire!

'It comforts me in this one thought to dwell,
That I subdued me to my father's will;
Because the kiss he gave me, ere I fell,
Sweetens the spirit still.

'Moreover it is written that my race
Hew'd Ammon, hip and thigh, from Aroer
On Arnon unto Minneth.' Here her face
Glow'd, as I look'd at her.

She lock'd her lips: she left me where I stood:
'Glory to God,' she sang, and past afar,
Thridding the sombre boskage of the wood,
Toward the morning-star.

Losing her carol I stood pensively,
As one that from a casement leans his head,
When midnight bells cease ringing suddenly,
And the old year is dead.

'Alas! alas!' a low voice, full of care,
Murmur'd beside me: 'Turn and look on me:
I am that Rosamond, whom men call fair,
If what I was I be.

'Would I had been some maiden coarse and poor!
O me, that I should ever see the light!
Those dragon eyes of anger'd Eleanor
Do hunt me, day and night.'

She ceased in tears, fallen from hope and trust:
To whom the Egyptian: 'O, you tamely died!
You should have clung to Fulvia's waist, and thrust
The dagger thro' her side.'

With that sharp sound the white dawn's creeping beams,
Stol'n to my brain, dissolved the mystery
Of folded sleep. The captain of my dreams
Ruled in the eastern sky.

Morn broaden'd on the borders of the dark,
Ere I saw her, who clasp'd in her last trance
Her murder'd father's head, or Joan of Arc,
A light of ancient France;

Or her who knew that Love can vanquish Death,
Who kneeling, with one arm about her king,
Drew forth the poison with her balmy breath,
Sweet as new buds in Spring.

No memory labors longer from the deep
Gold-mines of thought to lift the hidden ore
That glimpses, moving up, than I from sleep
To gather and tell o'er

Each little sound and sight. With what dull pain
Compass'd, how eagerly I sought to strike
Into that wondrous track of dreams again!
But no two dreams are like.

As when a soul laments, which hath been blest,
Desiring what is mingled with past years,
In yearnings that can never be exprest
By signs or groans or tears;

Because all words, tho' cull'd with choicest art,
Failing to give the bitter of the sweet,
Wither beneath the palate, and the heart
Faints, faded by its heat.

THE BLACKBIRD.

O BLACKBIRD! sing me something well:
While all the neighbors shoot thee round,
I keep smooth plats of fruitful ground,
Where thou may'st warble, eat and dwell.

The espaliers and the standards all
Are thine; the range of lawn and park:
The unnetted black-hearts ripen dark,
All thine, against the garden wall.

Yet, tho' I spared thee all the spring,
Thy sole delight is, sitting still,
With that gold dagger of thy bill
To fret the summer jenneting.

A golden bill! the silver tongue,
Cold February loved, is dry:
Plenty corrupts the melody
That made thee famous once, when young:

And in the sultry garden-squares,
Now thy flute-notes are changed to coarse,
I hear thee not at all, or hoarse
As when a hawker hawks his wares.

Take warning! he that will not sing
While yon sun prospers in the blue,
Shall sing for want, ere leaves are new,
Caught in the frozen palms of Spring.

THE DEATH OF THE OLD YEAR.

FULL knee-deep lies the winter snow,
And the winter winds are wearily sighing:
Toll ye the church-bell sad and slow,
And tread softly and speak low,
For the old year lies a-dying.
Old year, you must not die;
You came to us so readily,
You lived with us so steadily,
Old year, you shall not die.

He lieth still: he doth not move:
He will not see the dawn of day.
He hath no other life above.
He gave me a friend, and a true true-love,
And the New-year will take 'em away.
Old year, you must not go;
So long as you have been with us,
Such joy as you have seen with us,
Old year, you shall not go.

He froth'd his bumpers to the brim;
A jollier year we shall not see.
But tho' his eyes are waxing dim,
And tho' his foes speak ill of him,
He was a friend to me.
Old year, you shall not die;
We did so laugh and cry with you,
I've half a mind to die with you,
Old year, if you must die.

He was full of joke and jest,
But all his merry quips are o'er.
To see him die, across the waste
His son and heir doth ride post-haste,
But he'll be dead before.
Every one for his own.
The night is starry and cold, my friend,

"THE LIGHT BURNS LOW: 'TIS NEARLY TWELVE O'CLOCK."—*Page 39*

And the New-year blithe and
bold, my friend,
Comes up to take his own.

How hard he breathes! over the snow
I heard just now the crowing cock.
The shadows flicker to and fro:
The cricket chirps: the light burns
low:
'Tis nearly twelve o'clock.
Shake hands, before you die.
Old year, we'll dearly rue for you:
What is it we can do for you?
Speak out before you die.

His face is growing sharp and thin.
Alack! our friend is gone.
Close up his eyes: tie up his chin:
Step from the corpse, and let him in
That standeth there alone,
And waiteth at the door.
There's a new foot on the floor, my
friend,
And a new face at the door, my
friend,
A new face at the door.

TO J. S.

THE wind, that beats the mountain,
blows
More softly round the open wold,
And gently comes the world to those
That are cast in gentle mould.

And me this knowledge bolder made,
Or else I had not dared to flow
In these words toward you, and invade
Even with a verse your holy woe.

'Tis strange that those we lean on
most,
Those in whose laps our limbs
are nursed,
Fall into shadow, soonest lost:
Those we love first are taken first.

God gives us love. Something to love
He lends us; but, when love is
grown
To ripeness, that on which it throve
Falls off, and love is left alone.

This is the curse of time. Alas!
In grief I am not all unlearn'd;
Once thro' mine own doors Death did
pass;
One went, who never hath
return'd.

He will not smile—not speak to me
Once more. Two years his chair
is seen
Empty before us. That was he
Without whose life I had not
been.

Your loss is rarer; for this star
Rose with you thro' a little arc
Of heaven, nor having wander'd far
Shot on the sudden into dark.

I knew your brother: his mute dust
I honor and his living worth:
A man more pure and bold and just
Was never born into the earth.

I have not look'd upon you nigh,
Since that dear soul hath fall'n
asleep.
Great Nature is more wise than I:
I will not tell you not to weep.

And tho' mine own eyes fill with dew,
Drawn from the spirit thro' the
brain,
I will not even preach to you,
'Weep, weeping dulls the inward
pain.'

Let Grief be her own mistress still.
She loveth her own anguish deep
More than much pleasure. Let her
will
Be done—to weep or not to weep.

I will not say, 'God's ordinance
Of Death is blown in every wind;'
For that is not a common chance
That takes away a noble mind.

His memory long will live alone
In all our hearts, as mournful light
That broods above the fallen sun,
And dwells in heaven half the
night.

Vain solace! Memory standing near
Cast down her eyes, and in her throat
Her voice seem'd distant, and a tear
Dropt on the letters as I wrote.

I wrote I know not what. In truth,
How *should* I soothe you anyway,
Who miss the brother of your youth?
Yet something I did wish to say:

For he too was a friend to me:
Both are my friends, and my true breast
Bleedeth for both; yet it may be
That only silence suiteth best.

Words weaker than your grief would make
Grief more. 'Twere better I should cease
Although myself could almost take
The place of him that sleeps in peace.

Sleep sweetly, tender heart, in peace:
Sleep, holy spirit, blessed soul,
While the stars burn, the moons increase,
And the great ages onward roll.

Sleep till the end, true soul and sweet.
Nothing comes to thee new or strange.
Sleep full of rest from head to feet;
Lie still, dry dust, secure of change.

ON A MOURNER.

I.

NATURE, so far as in her lies,
Imitates God, and turns her face
To every land beneath the skies,
Counts nothing that she meets with base,
But lives and loves in every place

II.

Fills out the homely quickset-screens,
And makes the purple lilac ripe,
Steps from her airy hill, and greens
The swamp, where humm'd the dropping snipe,
With moss and braided marish-pipe;

III.

And on thy heart a finger lays,
Saying, 'Beat quicker, for the time
Is pleasant, and the woods and ways
Are pleasant, and the beech and lime
Put forth and feel a gladder clime.'

IV.

And murmurs of a deeper voice,
Going before to some far shrine,
Teach that sick heart the stronger choice,
Till all thy life one way incline
With one wide Will that closes thine.

V.

And when the zoning eve has died
Where yon dark valleys wind forlorn,
Come Hope and Memory, spouse and bride,
From out the borders of the morn,
With that fair child betwixt them born.

VI.

And when no mortal motion jars
The blackness round the tombing sod,
Thro' silence and the trembling stars
Comes Faith from tracts no feet have trod,
And Virtue, like a household god

VII.

Promising empire; such as those
Once heard at dead of night to greet
Troy's wandering prince, so that he rose
With sacrifice, while all the fleet
Had rest by stony hills of Crete.

You ask me, why, tho' ill at ease,
Within this region I subsist,
Whose spirits falter in the mist,
And languish for the purple seas.

It is the land that freemen till,
That sober-suited Freedom chose,
The land, where girt with friends or foes
A man may speak the thing he will;

A land of settled government,
A land of just and old renown,
Where Freedom slowly broadens down
From precedent to precedent:

Where faction seldom gathers head,
But by degrees to fullness wrought,
The strength of some diffusive thought
Hath time and space to work and spread.

Should banded unions persecute
Opinion, and induce a time
When single thought is civil crime,
And individual freedom mute;

Tho' Power should make from land to land
The name of Britain trebly great—
Tho' every channel of the State
Should fill and choke with golden sand—

Yet waft me from the harbor-mouth,
Wild wind! I seek a warmer sky,
And I will see before I die
The palms and temples of the South.

Of old sat Freedom on the heights,
The thunders breaking at her feet:
Above her shook the starry lights:
She heard the torrents meet.

There in her place she did rejoice,
Self-gather'd in her prophet-mind,
But fragments of her mighty voice
Came rolling on the wind.

Then stept she down thro' town and field
To mingle with the human race,
And part by part to men reveal'd
The fullness of her face—

Grave mother of majestic works,
From her isle-altar gazing down,
Who, God-like, grasps the triple forks,
And, King-like, wears the crown:

Her open eyes desire the truth.
The wisdom of a thousand years
Is in them. May perpetual youth
Keep dry their light from tears;

That her fair form may stand and shine,
Make bright our days and light our dreams,
Turning to scorn with lips divine
The falsehood of extremes!

Love thou thy land, with love far-brought
From out the storied Past, and used
Within the Present, but transfused
Thro' future time by power of thought.

True love turn'd round on fixed poles,
Love, that endures not sordid ends,
For English natures, freemen, friends,
Thy brothers and immortal souls.

But pamper not a hasty time,
Nor feed with crude imaginings
The herd, wild hearts and feeble wings
That every sophister can lime.

Deliver not the tasks of might
To weakness, neither hide the ray
From those, not blind, who wait for day,
Tho' sitting girt with doubtful light.

Make knowledge circle with the winds;
But let her herald, Reverence, fly
Before her to whatever sky
Bear seed of men and growth of minds.

Watch what main-currents draw the years:
Cut Prejudice against the grain:
But gentle words are always gain:
Regard the weakness of thy peers:

Nor toil for title, place, or touch
Of pension, neither count on praise:
It grows to guerdon after-days:
Nor deal in watch-words overmuch:

Not clinging to some ancient saw;
Not master'd by some modern term;
Not swift nor slow to change, but firm:
And in its season bring the law;

That from Discussion's lip may fall
With Life, that, working strongly, binds—
Set in all lights by many minds,
To close the interests of all.

For Nature also, cold and warm,
And moist and dry, devising long,
Thro' many agents making strong,
Matures the individual form.

Meet is it changes should control
Our being, lest we rust in ease.
We all are changed by still degrees,
All but the basis of the soul.

So let the change which comes be free
To ingroove itself with that which flies,
And work, a joint of state, that plies
Its office, moved with sympathy.

A saying, hard to shape in act;
For all the past of Time reveals
A bridal dawn of thunder-peals,
Wherever Thought hath wedded Fact.

Ev'n now we hear with inward strife
A motion toiling in the gloom—
The Spirit of the years to come
Yearning to mix himself with Life.

A slow-develop'd strength awaits
Completion in a painful school;
Phantoms of other forms of rule,
New Majesties of mighty States—

The warders of the growing hour,
But vague in vapor, hard to mark;
And round them sea and air are dark
With great contrivances of Power.

Of many changes, aptly join'd,
Is bodied forth the second whole.
Regard gradation, lest the soul
Of Discord race the rising wind;

A wind to puff your idol-fires,
And heap their ashes on the head;
To shame the boast so often made,
That we are wiser than our sires.

Oh yet, if Nature's evil star
Drive men in manhood, as in youth,
To follow flying steps of Truth
Across the brazen bridge of war—

If New and Old, disastrous feud,
Must ever shock, like armed foes,
And this be true, till Time shall close,
That Principles are rain'd in blood;

Not yet the wise of heart would cease
To hold his hope thro' shame and guilt,
But with his hand against the hilt,
Would pace the troubled land, like Peace;

Not less, tho' dogs of Faction bay,
Would serve his kind in deed and word,
Certain, if knowledge bring the sword,
That knowledge takes the sword away—

"I KNEW AN OLD WIFE LEAN AND POOR."—*Page 43.*

Would love the gleams of good that broke
From either side, nor veil his eyes:
And if some dreadful need should rise
Would strike, and firmly, and one stroke:

To-morrow yet would reap to-day,
As we bear blossom of the dead;
Earn well the thrifty months, nor wed
Raw Haste, half-sister to Delay.

ENGLAND AND AMERICA IN 1782.

O THOU, that sendest out the man
To rule by land and sea,
Strong mother of a Lion-line,
Be proud of those strong sons of thine
Who wrench'd their rights from thee!

What wonder, if in noble heat
Those men thine arms withstood,
Retaught the lesson thou hadst taught,
And in thy spirit with thee fought—
Who sprang from English blood!

But Thou rejoice with liberal joy,
Lift up thy rocky face,
And shatter, when the storms are black,
In many a streaming torrent back,
The seas that shock thy base!

Whatever harmonies of law
The growing world assume,
Thy work is thine—The single note
From that deep chord which Hampden smote
Will vibrate to the doom.

THE GOOSE.

I KNEW an old wife lean and poor,
Her rags scarce held together;
There strode a stranger to the door,
And it was windy weather.

He held a goose upon his arm,
He utter'd rhyme and reason,
'Here, take the goose, and keep you warm,
It is a stormy season.'

She caught the white goose by the leg,
A goose—'twas no great matter.
The goose let fall a golden egg
With cackle and with clatter.

She dropt the goose, and caught the pelf,
And ran to tell her neighbors;
And bless'd herself, and cursed herself,
And rested from her labors.

And feeding high, and living soft,
Grew plump and able-bodied;
Until the grave churchwarden doff'd,
The parson smirk'd and nodded.

So sitting, served by man and maid,
She felt her heart grow prouder:
But ah! the more the white goose laid
It clack'd and cackled louder.

It clutter'd here, it chuckled there;
It stirr'd the old wife's mettle:
She shifted in her elbow-chair,
And hurl'd the pan and kettle.

'A quinsy choke thy cursed note!'
Then wax'd her anger stronger.
'Go, take the goose, and wring her throat,
I will not bear it longer.'

Then yelp'd the cur, and yawl'd the cat;
Ran Gaffer, stumbled Gammer.
The goose flew this way and flew that,
And fill'd the house with clamor.

As head and heels upon the floor
They flounder'd all together,
There strode a stranger to the door,
And it was windy weather:

He took the goose upon his arm,
He utter'd words of scorning;
'So keep you cold, or keep you warm,
It is a stormy morning.'

The wild wind rang from park and plain,
And round the attics rumbled,
Till all the tables danced again,
And half the chimneys tumbled.

The glass blew in, the fire blew out,
The blast was hard and harder.
Her cap blew off, her gown blew up,
And a whirlwind clear'd the larder:

And while on all sides breaking loose
Her household fled the danger,
Quoth she, 'The Devil take the goose,
And God forget the stranger!'

ENGLISH IDYLLS

AND OTHER POEMS.

THE EPIC.

At Francis Allen's on the Christmas-eve,—
The game of forfeits done—the girls all kiss'd
Beneath the sacred bush and past away—
The parson Holmes, the poet Everard Hall,
The host, and I sat round the wassail-bowl,
Then half-way ebb'd: and there we held a talk,
How all the old honor had from Christmas gone,
Or gone, or dwindled down to some odd games
In some odd nooks like this; till I, tired out
With cutting eights that day upon the pond,
Where, three times slipping from the outer edge,
I bump'd the ice into three several stars,
Fell in a doze; and half-awake I heard
The parson taking wide and wider sweeps,
Now harping on the church-commissioners,
Now hawking at Geology and schism;
Until I woke, and found him settled down
Upon the general decay of faith
Right thro' the world, 'at home was little left,
And none abroad: there was no anchor, none,
To hold by.' Francis, laughing, clapt his hand
On Everard's shoulder, with 'I hold by him.'
'And I,' quoth Everard, 'by the wassail-bowl.'
'Why yes,' I said, 'we knew your gift that way
At college: but another which you had,
I mean of verse (for so we held it then),
What came of that?' 'You know,' said Frank, 'he burnt
His epic, his King Arthur, some twelve books'—
And then to me demanding why? 'Oh, sir,
He thought that nothing new was said, or else
Something so said 'twas nothing—that a truth
Looks freshest in the fashion of the day:
God knows: he has a mint of reasons: ask.
It pleased *me* well enough.' 'Nay, nay,' said Hall,

'Why take the style of those heroic times?
For nature brings not back the Mastodon,
Nor we those times; and why should any man
Remodel models? these twelve books of mine
Were faint Homeric echoes, nothing-worth,
Mere chaff and draff, much better burnt.' 'But I,'
Said Francis, 'pick'd the eleventh from this hearth
And have it: keep a thing, its use will come.
I hoard it as a sugar-plum for Holmes.'
He laugh'd, and I, tho' sleepy, like a horse
That hears the corn-bin open, prick'd my ears;
For I remember'd Everard's college fame
When we were Freshmen: then at my request
He brought it; and the poet little urged,
But with some prelude of disparagement,
Read, mouthing out his hollow oes and aes,
Deep-chested music, and to this result.

MORTE D'ARTHUR.

So all day long the noise of battle roll'd
Among the mountains by the winter sea;
Until King Arthur's table, man by man,
Had fallen in Lyonnesse about their Lord,
King Arthur: then, because his wound was deep,
The bold Sir Bedivere uplifted him,
Sir Bedivere, the last of all his knights,
And bore him to a chapel nigh the field,
A broken chancel with a broken cross,
That stood on a dark strait of barren land.
On one side lay the Ocean, and on one
Lay a great water, and the moon was full.
Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere:
'The sequel of to-day unsolders all
The goodliest fellowship of famous knights
Whereof this world holds record. Such a sleep
They sleep—the men I loved. I think that we
Shall never more, at any future time,
Delight our souls with talk of knightly deeds,
Walking about the gardens and the halls
Of Camelot, as in the days that were.
I perish by this people which I made,—
Tho' Merlin sware that I should come again
To rule once more—but let what will be, be,
I am so deeply smitten thro' the helm
That without help I cannot last ti'l morn.
Thou therefore take my brand Excalibur,
Which was my pride: for thou remember'st how
In those old days, one summer noon, an arm
Rose up from out the bosom of the lake,
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
Holding the sword—and how I row'd across
And took it, and have worn it, like a king:
And, wheresoever I am sung or told
In aftertime, this also shall be known:
But now delay not: take Excalibur,
And fling him far into the middle mere:
Watch what thou seëst, and lightly bring me word.'

To him replied the bold Sir Bedivere:
'It is not meet, Sir King, to leave thee thus,
Aidless, alone, and smitten thro' the helm.
A little thing may harm a wounded man.
Yet I thy hest will all perform at full,
Watch what I see, and lightly bring thee word.'
So saying, from the ruin'd shrine he stept
And in the moon athwart the place of tombs,
Where lay the mighty bones of ancient men,
Old knights, and over them the sea-wind sang
Shrill, chill, with flakes of foam. He, stepping down
By zig-zag paths, and juts of pointed rock,
Came on the shining levels of the lake.
There drew he forth the brand Excalibur,
And o'er him, drawing it, the winter moon,
Brightening the skirts of a long cloud, ran forth
And sparkled keen with frost against the hilt:
For all the haft twinkled with diamond sparks,
Myriads of topaz-lights, and jacinth-work
Of subtlest jewellery. He gazed so long
That both his eyes were dazzled, as he stood,
This way and that dividing the swift mind,
In act to throw: but at the last it seem'd
Better to leave Excalibur conceal'd
There in the many-knotted waterflags,
That whistled stiff and dry about the marge.
So strode he back slow to the wounded King.
Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere:
'Hast thou perform'd my mission which I gave?
What is it thou hast seen? or what hast heard?'
And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:
'I heard the ripple washing in the reeds,
And the wild water lapping on the crag.'
To whom replied King Arthur, faint and pale:
'Thou hast betray'd thy nature and thy name,
Not rendering true answer, as beseem'd
Thy fëalty, nor like a noble knight:
For surer sign had follow'd, either hand,
Or voice, or else a motion of the mere.
This is a shameful thing for men to lie.
Yet now, I charge thee, quickly go again
As thou art lief and dear, and do the thing
I bad thee, watch, and lightly bring me word.'
Then went Sir Bedivere the second time
Across the ridge, and paced beside the mere,
Counting the dewy pebbles, fix'd in thought;
But when he saw the wonder of the hilt,
How curiously and strangely chased, he smote
His palms together, and he cried aloud,
'And if indeed I cast the brand away,
Surely a precious thing, one worthy note,
Should thus be lost forever from the earth,
Which might have pleased the eyes of many men.
What good should follow this, if this were done?
What harm, undone? deep harm to disobey,
Seeing obedience is the bond of rule.

Were it well to obey then, if a king demand
An act unprofitable, against himself?
The King is sick, and knows not what he does.
What record, or what relic of my lord
Should be to aftertime, but empty breath
And rumors of a doubt? but were this kept,
Stored in some treasure-house of mighty kings,
Some one might show it at a joust of arms,
Saying, "King Arthur's sword, Excalibur,
Wrought by the lonely maiden of the Lake.
Nine years she wrought it, sitting in the deeps
Upon the hidden bases of the hills."
So might some old man speak in the aftertime
To all the people, winning reverence.
But now much honor and much fame were lost.'
So spake he, clouded with his own conceit,
And hid Excalibur the second time,
And so strode back slow to the wounded King.
Then spoke King Arthur, breathing heavily:
'What is it thou hast seen? or what hast heard?'
And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:
'I heard the water lapping on the crag,
And the long ripple washing in the reeds.'
To whom replied King Arthur, much in wrath:
'Ah, miserable and unkind, untrue,
Unknightly, traitor-hearted! Woe is me!
Authority forgets a dying king,
Laid widow'd of the power in his eye
That bow'd the will. I see thee what thou art,
For thou, the latest-left of all my knights,
In whom should meet the offices of all,
Thou wouldst betray me for the precious hilt;
Either from lust of gold, or like a girl
Valuing the giddy pleasure of the eyes.
Yet, for a man may fail in duty twice,
And the third time may prosper, get thee hence:
But, if thou spare to fling Excalibur,
I will arise and slay thee with my hands.'
Then quickly rose Sir Bedivere, and ran,
And, leaping down the ridges lightly, plunged
Among the bulrush-beds, and clutch'd the sword,
And strongly wheel'd and threw it. The great brand
Made lightnings in the splendor of the moon,
And flashing round and round, and whirl'd in an arch,
Shot like a streamer of the northern morn,
Seen where the moving isles of winter shock
By night, with noises of the northern sea.
So flash'd and fell the brand Excalibur:
But ere he dipt the surface, rose an arm
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
And caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd him
Three times, and drew him under in the mere.
And lightly went the other to the King.
Then spoke King Arthur, drawing thicker breath:
'Now see I by thine eyes that this is done.
Speak out: what is it thou hast heard, or seen?'
And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:
'Sir King, I closed mine eyelids, lest the gems

Should blind my purpose, for I never saw,
Nor shall see, here or elsewhere, till I die,
Not tho' I live three lives of mortal men,
So great a miracle as yonder hilt.
Then with both hands I flung him, wheeling him;
But when I look'd again, behold an arm,
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
That caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd him
Three times, and drew him under in the mere.'
And answer made King Arthur, breathing hard:
'My end draws nigh; 'tis time that I were gone.
Make broad thy shoulders to receive my weight,
And bear me to the margin; yet I fear
My wound hath taken cold, and I shall die.'
So saying, from the pavement he half rose,
Slowly, with pain, reclining on his arm,
And looking wistfully with wide blue eyes
As in a picture. Him Sir Bedivere
Remorsefully regarded thro' his tears,
And would have spoken, but he found not words,
Then took with care, and kneeling on one knee,
O'er both his shoulders drew the languid hands,
And rising bore him thro' the place of tombs.
But, as he walk'd, King Arthur panted hard,
Like one that feels a nightmare on his bed
When all the house is mute. So sigh'd the King,
Muttering and murmuring at his ear, 'Quick, quick!
I fear it is too late, and I shall die.'
But the other swiftly strode from ridge to ridge,
Clothed with his breath, and looking, as he walk'd,
Larger than human on the frozen hills.
He heard the deep behind him, and a cry
Before. His own thought drove him, like a goad.
Dry clash'd his harness in the icy caves
And barren chasms, and all to left and right
The bare black cliff clang'd round him, as he based
His feet on juts of slippery crag that rang
Sharp-smitten with the dint of armed heels—
And on a sudden, lo! the level lake,
And the long glories of the winter moon.
Then saw they how there hove a dusky barge,
Dark as a funeral scarf from stem to stern,
Beneath them; and descending they were ware
That all the decks were dense with stately forms
Black-stoled, black-hooded, like a dream—by these
Three Queens with crowns of gold—and from them rose
A cry that shiver'd to the tingling stars,
And, as it were one voice an agony
Of lamentation, like a wind, that shrills
All night in a waste land, where no one comes,
Or hath come, since the making of the world.
Then murmur'd Arthur, 'Place me in the barge,'
And to the barge they came. There those three Queens
Put forth their hands, and took the King, and wept.
But she, that rose the tallest of them all
And fairest, laid his head upon her lap,
And loosed the shatter'd casque, and chafed his hands,

And call'd him by his name, complaining loud,
And dropping bitter tears against his brow
Striped with dark blood: for all his face was white
And colorless, and like the wither'd moon
Smote by the fresh beam of the springing east;
And all his greaves and cuisses dash'd with drops
Of onset; and the light and lustrous curls—
That made his forehead like a rising sun
High from the daïs throne—were parch'd with dust;
Or, clotted into points and hanging loose,
Mix'd with the knightly growth that fringed his lips.
So like a shatter'd column lay the King;
Not like that Arthur who, with lance in rest,
From spur to plume a star of tournament,
Shot thro' the lists at Camelot, and charged
Before the eyes of ladies and of kings.
Then loudly cried the bold Sir Bedivere,
'Ah! my Lord Arthur, whither shall I go?
Where shall I hide my forehead and my eyes?
For now I see the true old times are dead,
When every morning brought a noble chance,
And every chance brought out a noble knight.
Such times have been not since the light that led
The holy Elders with the gift of myrrh.
But now the whole ROUND TABLE is dissolved
Which was an image of the mighty world;
And I, the last, go forth companionless,
And the days darken round me, and the years,
Among new men, strange faces, other minds.'
And slowly answered Arthur from the barge:
'The old order changeth, yielding place to new,
And God fulfils Himself in many ways,
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.
Comfort thyself: what comfort is in me?
I have lived my life, and that which I have done
May He within Himself make pure! but thou,
If thou shouldst never see my face again,
Pray for my soul. More things are wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of. Wherefore, let thy voice
Rise like a fountain for me night and day.
For what are men better than sheep or goats
That nourish a blind life within the brain,
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer
Both for themselves and those who call them friend?
For so the whole round earth is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.
But now farewell. I am going a long way
With these thou seëst—if indeed I go—
(For all my mind is clouded with a doubt)
To the island-valley of Avilion;
Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,
Nor ever wind blows loudly; but it lies
Deep-meadow'd, happy fair with orchard-lawns
And bowery hollows crown'd with summer sea,

Where I will heal me of my grievous wound.'
So said he, and the barge with oar and sail
Moved from the brink, like some full-breasted swan
That, fluting a wild carol ere her death,
Ruffles her pure cold plume, and takes the flood
With swarthy webs. Long stood Sir Bedivere
Revolving many memories, till the hull
Look'd one black dot against the verge of dawn,
And on the mere the wailing died away.

HERE ended Hall, and our last light, that long
Had wink'd and threaten'd darkness, flared and fell:
At which the Parson, sent to sleep with sound,
And waked with silence, grunted 'Good!' but we
Sat rapt: it was the tone with which he read—
Perhaps some modern touches here and there
Redeem'd it from the charge of nothingness—
Or else we loved the man, and prized his work;
I know not: but we sitting, as I said,
The cock crew loud; as at that time of year
The lusty bird takes every hour for dawn:
Then Francis, muttering, like a man ill-used,
'There now—that's nothing!' drew a little back,
And drove his heel into the smoulder'd log,
That sent a blast of sparkles up the flue:
And so to bed; where yet in sleep I seem'd
To sail with Arthur under looming shores,
Point after point; till on to dawn, when dreams
Begin to feel the truth and stir of day,
To me, methought, who waited with a crowd,
There came a bark that, blowing forward, bore
King Arthur, like a modern gentleman
Of stateliest port; and all the people cried,
'Arthur is come again: he cannot die.'
Then those that stood upon the hills behind
Repeated—'Come again, and thrice as fair;'
And, further inland, voices echo'd—'Come
With all good things, and war shall be no more.'
At this a hundred bells began to peal,
That with the sound I woke, and heard indeed
The clear church-bells ring in the Christmas-morn.

THE GARDENER'S DAUGHTER;

OR, THE PICTURES.

THIS morning is the morning of the day,
When I and Eustace from the city went
To see the Gardener's Daughter; I and he,
Brothers in Art; a friendship so complete
Portion'd in halves between us, that we grew
The fable of the city where we dwelt.
My Eustace might have sat for Hercules;
So muscular he spread, so broad of breast.
He, by some law that holds in love, and draws
The greater to the lesser, long desired

A certain miracle of symmetry,
A miniature of loveliness, all grace
Summ'd up and closed in little;—Juliet, she
So light of foot, so light of spirit—oh, she
To me myself, for some three careless moons,
The summer pilot of an empty heart
Unto the shores of nothing! Know you not
Such touches are but embassies of love,
To tamper with the feelings, ere he found
Empire for life? but Eustace painted her,
And said to me, she sitting with us then,
'When will *you* paint like this?' and I replied,
(My words were half in earnest, half in jest,)
''Tis not your work, but Love's. Love, unperceived,
A more ideal Artist he than all,
Came, drew your pencil from you, made those eyes
Darker than darkest pansies, and that hair
More black than ashbuds in the front of March.'
And Juliet answer'd laughing, 'Go and see
The Gardener's daughter: trust me, after that,
You scarce can fail to match his master-piece.'
And up we rose, and on the spur we went.
Not wholly in the busy world, nor quite
Beyond it, blooms the garden that I love.
News from the humming city comes to it
In sound of funeral or of marriage bells;
And, sitting muffled in dark leaves, you hear
The windy clanging of the minster clock;
Although between it and the garden lies
A league of grass, wash'd by a slow broad stream,
That, stirr'd with languid pulses of the oar,
Waves all its lazy lilies, and creeps on,
Barge-laden, to three arches of a bridge
Crown'd with the minster-towers.
The fields between
Are dewy-fresh, browsed by deep-udder'd kine,
And all about the large lime feathers low,
The lime a summer home of murmurous wings.
In that still place she, hoarded in herself,
Grew, seldom seen; not less among us lived
Her fame from lip to lip. Who had not heard
Of Rose, the Gardener's daughter? Where was he,
So blunt in memory, so old at heart,
At such a distance from his youth in grief,
That, having seen, forgot? The common mouth,
So gross to express delight, in praise of her
Grew oratory. Such a lord is Love,
And Beauty such a mistress of the world.
And if I said that Fancy, led by Love,
Would play with flying forms and images,
Yet this is also true, that, long before
I look'd upon her, when I heard her name
My heart was like a prophet to my heart,
And told me I should love. A crowd of hopes,
That sought to sow themselves like winged seeds,
Born out of everything I heard and saw,
Flutter'd about my senses and my soul;
And vague desires, like fitful blasts of balm

To one that travels quickly, made the air
Of Life delicious, and all kinds of thought,
That verged upon them, sweeter than the dream
Dream'd by a happy man, when the dark East,
Unseen, is brightening to his bridal morn.
And sure this orbit of the memory folds
For ever in itself the day we went
To see her. All the land in flowery squares,
Beneath a broad and equal-blowing wind,
Smelt of the coming summer, as one large cloud
Drew downward: but all else of heaven was pure
Up to the Sun, and May from verge to verge,
And May with me from head to heel. And now,
As tho' 'twere yesterday, as tho' it were
The hour just flown, that morn with all its sound,
(For those old Mays had thrice the life of these,)
Rings in mine ears. The steer forgot to graze,
And, where the hedge-row cuts the pathway, stood,
Leaning his horns into the neighbor field,
And lowing to his fellows. From the woods
Came voices of the well-contented doves.
The lark could scarce get out his notes for joy,
But shook his song together as he near'd
His happy home, the ground. To left and right,
The cuckoo told his name to all the hills;
The mellow ouzel fluted in the elm;
The redcap whistled; and the nightingale
Sang loud, as tho' he were the bird of day.
And Eustace turn'd, and smiling said to me,
'Hear how the bushes echo! by my life,
These birds have joyful thoughts. Think you they sing
Like poets, from the vanity of song?
Or have they any sense of why they sing?
And would they praise the heavens for what they have?'
And I made answer, 'Were there nothing else
For which to praise the heavens but only love,
That only love were cause enough for praise.'
Lightly he laugh'd, as one that read my thought,
And on we went; but ere an hour had pass'd,
We reach'd a meadow slanting to the North;
Down which a well-worn pathway courted us
To one green wicket in a privet hedge;
This, yielding, gave into a grassy walk
Thro' crowded lilac-ambush trimly pruned;
And one warm gust, full-fed with perfume, blew
Beyond us, as we enter'd in the cool.
The garden stretches southward. In the midst
A cedar spread his dark-green layers of shade.
The garden-glasses shone, and momently
The twinkling laurel scatter'd silver lights.
'Eustace,' I said, 'this wonder keeps the house.'
He nodded, but a moment afterwards
He cried, 'Look! look!' Before he ceased I turn'd,
And, ere a star can wink, beheld her there.
For up the porch there grew an Eastern rose,
That, flowering high, the last night's gale had caught,

And blown across the walk. One arm aloft—
Gown'd in pure white, that fitted to the shape—
Holding the bush, to fix it back, she stood,
A single stream of all her soft brown hair
Pour'd on one side: the shadow of the flowers
Stole all the golden gloss, and, wavering
Lovingly lower, trembled on her waist—
Ah, happy shade—and still went wavering down,
But, ere it touch'd a foot, that might have danced
The greensward into greener circles, dipt,
And mix'd with shadows of the common ground!
But the full day dwelt on her brows, and sunn'd
Her violet eyes, and all her Hebe bloom,
And doubled his own warmth against her lips,
And on the bounteous wave of such a breast
As never pencil drew. Half light, half shade,
She stood, a sight to make an old man young.
So rapt, we near'd the house; but she, a Rose
In roses, mingled with her fragrant toil,
Nor heard us come, nor from her tendance turn'd
Into the world without; till close at hand,
And almost ere I knew mine own intent,
This murmur broke the stillness of that air
Which brooded round about her: 'Ah, one rose,
One rose, but one, by those fair fingers cull'd,
Were worth a hundred kisses press'd on lips
Less exquisite than thine.'
She look'd: but all
Suffused with blushes—neither self-possess'd
Nor startled, but betwixt this mood and that,
Divided in a graceful quiet—paused,
And dropt the branch she held, and turning, wound
Her looser hair in braid, and stirr'd her lips
For some sweet answer, tho' no answer came,
Nor yet refused the rose, but granted it,
And moved away, and left me, statue-like,
In act to render thanks.
I, that whole day,
Saw her no more, altho' I linger'd there
Till every daisy slept, and Love's white star
Beam'd thro' the thicken'd cedar in the dusk.
So home we went, and all the live-long way
With solemn gibe did Eustace banter me.
'Now,' said he, 'will you climb the top of Art.
You cannot fail but work in hues to dim
The Titianic Flora. Will you match
My Juliet? you, not you,—the Master, Love,
A more ideal Artist he than all.'
So home I went, but could not sleep for joy,
Reading her perfect features in the gloom,
Kissing the rose she gave me o'er and o'er,
And shaping faithful record of the glance
That graced the giving—such a noise of life
Swarm'd in the golden present, such a voice
Call'd to me from the years to come, and such
A length of bright horizon rimm'd the dark.
And all that night I heard the watchman peal

The sliding season: all that night I heard
The heavy clocks knolling the drowsy hours.
The drowsy hours, dispensers of all good,
O'er the mute city stole with folded wings,
Distilling odors on me as they went
To greet their fairer sisters of the East.
Love at first sight, first-born, and heir to all,
Made this night thus. Henceforward squall nor storm
Could keep me from that Eden where she dwelt.
Light pretexts drew me; sometimes a Dutch love
For tulips; then for roses, moss or musk,
To grace my city rooms; or fruits and cream
Served in the weeping elm; and more and more
A word could bring the color to my cheek;
A thought would fill my eyes with happy dew;
Love trebled life within me, and with each
The year increased.
The daughters of the year,
One after one, thro' that still garden pass'd;
Each garlanded with her peculiar flower
Danced into light, and died into the shade;
And each in passing touch'd with some new grace
Or seem'd to touch her, so that day by day,
Like one that never can be wholly known,
Her beauty grew; till Autumn brought an hour
For Eustace, when I heard his deep 'I will,'
Breathed, like the covenant of a God, to hold
From thence thro' all the worlds: but I rose up
Full of his bliss, and following her dark eyes
Felt earth as air beneath me, till I reach'd
The wicket-gate, and found her standing there.
There sat we down upon a garden mound,
Two mutually enfolded; Love, the third,
Between us, in the circle of his arms
Enwound us both; and over many a range
Of waning lime the gray cathedral towers,
Across a hazy glimmer of the west,
Reveal'd their shining windows: from them clash'd
The bells; we listen'd; with the time we play'd,
We spoke of other things; we coursed about
The subject most at heart, more near and near,
Like doves about a dovecote, wheeling round
The central wish, until we settled there.
Then, in that time and place, I spoke to her,
Requiring, tho' I knew it was mine own,
Yet for the pleasure that I took to hear,
Requiring at her hand the greatest gift,
A woman's heart, the heart of her I loved;
And in that time and place she answer'd me,
And in the compass of three little words,
More musical than ever came in one,
The silver fragments of a broken voice,
Made me most happy, faltering, 'I am thine.'
Shall I cease here? Is this enough to say
That my desire, like all strongest hopes,
By its own energy fulfill'd itself,
Merged in completion? Would you learn at full

How passion rose thro' circumstantial grades
Beyond all grades develop'd? and indeed
I had not staid so long to tell you all,
But while I mused came Memory with sad eyes,
Holding the folded annals of my youth;
And while I mused, Love with knit brows went by,
And with a flying finger swept my lips,
And spake, 'Be wise: not easily forgiven
Are those, who setting wide the doors that bar
The secret bridal chambers of the heart,
Let in the day.' Here, then, my words have end.
Yet might I tell of meetings, of farewells—
Of that which came between, more sweet than each,
In whispers, like the whispers of the leaves
That tremble round a nightingale—in sighs
Which perfect Joy, perplex'd for utterance,
Stole from her sister Sorrow. Might I not tell
Of difference, reconcilement, pledges given,
And vows, where there was never need of vows,
And kisses, where the heart on one wild leap
Hung tranced from all pulsation, as above
The heavens between their fairy fleeces pale
Sow'd all their mystic gulfs with fleeting stars;
Or while the balmy glooming, crescent-lit,
Spread the light haze along the river-shores,
And in the hollows; or as once we met
Unheedful, tho' beneath a whispering rain
Night slid down one long stream of sighing wind,
And in her bosom bore the baby, Sleep.
But this whole hour your eyes have been intent
On that veil'd picture—veil'd, for what it holds
May not be dwelt on by the common day.
This prelude has prepared thee. Raise thy soul;
Make thine heart ready with thine eyes: the time
Is come to raise the veil.
Behold her there,
As I beheld her ere she knew my heart,
My first, last love; the idol of my youth,
The darling of my manhood, and, alas!
Now the most blessed memory of mine age.

DORA.

WITH farmer Allan at the farm abode
William and Dora. William was his son,
And she his niece. He often look'd at them,
And often thought, 'I'll make them man and wife.'
Now Dora felt her uncle's will in all,
And yearn'd toward William; but the youth, because
He had been always with her in the house,
Thought not of Dora.
Then there came a day
When Allan call'd his son, and said, 'My son:
I married late, but I would wish to see
My grandchild on my knees before I die:
And I have set my heart upon a match.
Now therefore look to Dora; she is well

To look to; thrifty too beyond her age.
She is my brother's daughter: he and I
Had once hard words, and parted, and he died
In foreign lands; but for his sake I bred
His daughter Dora: take her for your wife;
For I have wish'd this marriage, night and day,
For many years.' But William answer'd short;
'I cannot marry Dora; by my life,
I will not marry Dora.' Then the old man
Was wroth, and doubled up his hands, and said:
'You will not, boy! you dare to answer thus!
But in my time a father's word was law,
And so it shall be now for me. Look to it;
Consider, William: take a month to think,
And let me have an answer to my wish;
Or, by the Lord that made me, you shall pack,
And never more darken my doors again.'
But William answer'd madly; bit his lips,
And broke away. The more he look'd at her
The less he liked her; and his ways were harsh;
But Dora bore them meekly. Then before
The month was out he left his father's house,
And hired himself to work within the fields;
And half in love, half spite, he woo'd and wed
A laborer's daughter, Mary Morrison.
Then, when the bells were ringing, Allan call'd
His niece and said: 'My girl, I love you well;
But if you speak with him that was my son,
Or change a word with her he calls his wife,
My home is none of yours. My will is law.'
And Dora promised, being meek. She thought,
'It cannot be: my uncle's mind will change.'
And days went on, and there was born a boy
To William; then distresses came on him;
And day by day he pass'd his father's gate,
Heart-broken, and his father help'd him not.
But Dora stored what little she could save,
And sent it them by stealth, nor did they know
Who sent it; till at last a fever seized
On William, and in harvest time he died.
Then Dora went to Mary. Mary sat
And look'd with tears upon her boy, and thought
Hard things of Dora. Dora came and said:
'I have obey'd my uncle until now,
And I have sinn'd, for it was all thro' me
This evil came on William at the first.
But, Mary, for the sake of him that's gone,
And for your sake, the woman that he chose,
And for this orphan, I am come to you:
You know there has not been for these five years
So full a harvest: let me take the boy,
And I will set him in my uncle's eye
Among the wheat; that when his heart is glad
Of the full harvest, he may see the boy,
And bless him for the sake of him that's gone.'
And Dora took the child, and went her way
Across the wheat, and sat upon a mound

That was unsown, where many poppies grew.
Far off the farmer came into the field
And spied her not; for none of all his men
Dare tell him Dora waited with the child;
And Dora would have risen and gone to him,
But her heart fail'd her; and the reapers reap'd,
And the sun fell, and all the land was dark.
But when the morrow came, she rose and took
The child once more, and sat upon the mound;
And made a little wreath of all the flowers
That grew about, and tied it round his hat
To make him pleasing in her uncle's eye.
Then when the farmer pass'd into the field
He spied her, and he left his men at work,
And came and said: 'Where were you yesterday?
Whose child is that? What are you doing here?'
So Dora cast her eyes upon the ground,
And answer'd softly, 'This is William's child!'
'And did I not,' said Allan, 'did I not
Forbid you, Dora?' Dora said again:
'Do with me as you will, but take the child,
And bless him for the sake of him that's gone!'
And Allan said, 'I see it is a trick
Got up betwixt you and the woman there.
I must be taught my duty, and by you!
You knew my word was law, and yet you dared
To slight it. Well—for I will take the boy;
But go you hence, and never see me more.'
So saying, he took the boy that cried aloud
And struggled hard. The wreath of flowers fell
At Dora's feet. She bow'd upon her hands,
And the boy's cry came to her from the field,
More and more distant. She bow'd down her head,
Remembering the day when first she came,
And all the things that had been. She bow'd down
And wept in secret; and the reapers reap'd,
And the sun fell, and all the land was dark.
Then Dora went to Mary's house, and stood
Upon the threshold. Mary saw the boy
Was not with Dora. She broke out in praise
To God, that help'd her in her widowhood.
And Dora said, 'My uncle took the boy;
But, Mary, let me live and work with you:
He says that he will never see me more.'
Then answer'd Mary, 'This shall never be,
That thou shouldst take my trouble on thyself:
And, now I think, he shall not have the boy,
For he will teach him hardness, and to slight
His mother; therefore thou and I will go,
And I will have my boy, and bring him home;
And I will beg of him to take thee back:
But if he will not take thee back again,
Then thou and I will live within one house,
And work for William's child, until he grows
Of age to help us.'

So the women kiss'd
Each other, and set out, and reach'd the farm.
The door was off the latch: they peep'd, and saw
The boy set up betwixt his grandsire's knees,
Who thrust him in the hollows of his arm,
And clapt him on the hands and on the cheeks,
Like one that loved him: and the lad stretch'd out
And babbled for the golden seal, that hung
From Allan's watch, and sparkled by the fire.
Then they came in: but when the boy beheld
His mother, he cried out to come to her:
And Allan set him down, and Mary said:
'O Father!—if you let me call you so—
I never came a-begging for myself,
Or William, or this child; but now I come
For Dora: take her back; she loves you well.
O Sir, when William died, he died at peace
With all men; for I ask'd him, and he said,
He could not ever rue his marrying me—
I had been a patient wife: but, Sir, he said
That he was wrong to cross his father thus:
"God bless him!" he said, "and may he never know
The troubles I have gone thro'!" Then he turn'd
His face and pass'd—unhappy that I am!
But now, Sir, let me have my boy, for you
Will make him hard, and he will learn to slight
His father's memory; and take Dora back,
And let all this be as it was before.'

So Mary said, and Dora hid her face
By Mary. There was silence in the room;
And all at once the old man burst in sobs:—
'I have been to blame—to blame. I have kill'd my son.
I have kill'd him—but I loved him—my dear son.
May God forgive me!—I have been to blame.
Kiss me, my children.'
Then they clung about
The old man's neck, and kiss'd him many times.
And all the man was broken with remorse;
And all his love came back a hundredfold;
And for three hours he sobb'd o'er William's child
Thinking of William.
So those four abode
Within one house together; and as years
Went forward, Mary took another mate;
But Dora lived unmarried till her death.

AUDLEY COURT.

'THE Bull, the Fleece are cramm'd, and not a room
For love or money. Let us picnic there
At Audley Court.'
I spoke, while Audley feast
Humm'd like a hive all round the narrow quay,
To Francis, with a basket on his arm,
To Francis just alighted from the boat,
And breathing of the sea. 'With all my heart,'
Said Francis. Then we shoulder'd thro' the swarm,
And rounded by the stillness of the beach
To where the bay runs up its latest horn.

We left the dying ebb that faintly lipp'd
The flat red granite; so by many a sweep
Of meadow smooth from aftermath we reach'd
The griffin-guarded gates, and pass'd thro' all
The pillar'd dusk of sounding sycamores,
And cross'd the garden to the gardener's lodge,
With all its casements bedded, and its walls
And chimneys muffled in the leafy vine.
There, on a slope of orchard, Francis laid
A damask napkin wrought with horse and hound,
Brought out a dusky loaf that smelt of home,
And, half-cut-down, a pasty costly-made,
Where quail and pigeon, lark and leveret lay,
Like fossils of the rock, with golden yolks
Imbedded and injellied; last, with these,
A flask of cider from his father's vats,
Prime, which I knew; and so we sat and eat
And talk'd old matters over; who was dead,
Who married, who was like to be, and how
The races went, and who would rent the hall:
Then touch'd upon the game, how scarce it was
This season; glancing thence, discuss'd the farm,
The four-field system, and the price of grain;
And struck upon the corn-laws, where we split,
And came again together on the king
With heated faces; till he laugh'd aloud;
And, while the blackbird on the pippin hung
To hear him, clapt his hand in mine and sang—

'Oh! who would fight and march and countermarch,
Be shot for sixpence in a battle-field,
And shovell'd up into some bloody trench
Where no one knows? but let me live my life.

'Oh! who would cast and balance at a desk,
Perch'd like a crow upon a three-legg'd stool,
Till all his juice is dried, and all his joints
Are full of chalk? but let me live my life.

'Who'd serve the state? for if I carved my name
Upon the cliffs that guard my native land,
I might as well have traced it in the sands;
The sea wastes all: but let me live my life.

'Oh! who would love? I woo'd a woman once,
But she was sharper than an eastern wind,
And all my heart turn'd from her, as a thorn
Turns from the sea; but let me live my life.'

He sang his song, and I replied with mine:
I found it in a volume, all of songs,
Knock'd down to me, when old Sir Robert's pride,
His books—the more the pity, so I said—
Came to the hammer here in March—and this—
I set the words, and added names I knew.

'Sleep, Ellen Aubrey, sleep, and dream of me:
Sleep, Ellen, folded in thy sister's arm,
And sleeping, haply dream her arm is mine.

'Sleep, Ellen, folded in Emilia's arm;
Emilia, fairer than all else but thou,
For thou art fairer than all else that is.

'Sleep, breathing health and peace upon her breast:
Sleep, breathing love and trust against her lip:
I go to-night: I come to-morrow morn.
'I go, but I return: I would I were
The pilot of the darkness and the dream.
Sleep, Ellen Aubrey, love, and dream of me.'
So sang we each to either, Francis Hale,
The farmer's son, who lived across the bay,
My friend; and I, that having wherewithal,
And in the fallow leisure of my life
A rolling stone of here and everywhere,
Did what I would; but ere the night we rose
And saunter'd home beneath a moon, that, just
In crescent, dimly rain'd about the leaf
Twilights of airy silver, till we reach'd
The limit of the hills; and as we sank
From rock to rock upon the glooming quay,
The town was hush'd beneath us: lower down
The bay was oily calm; the harbor-buoy,
Sole star of phosphorescence in the calm,
With one green sparkle ever and anon
Dipt by itself, and we were glad at heart.

WALKING TO THE MAIL.

John. I'm glad I walk'd. How fresh the meadows look
Above the river, and, but a month ago,
The whole hill-side was redder than a fox.
Is yon plantation where this byway joins
The turnpike?
James. Yes.
John. And when does this come by?
James. The mail? At one o'clock.
John. What is it now?
James. A quarter to.
John. Whose house is that I see?
No, not the County Member's with the vane:
Up higher with the yew-tree by it, and half
A score of gables.
James. That? Sir Edward Head's:
But he's abroad: the place is to be sold.
John. Oh, his. He was not broken.
James. No, sir, he,
Vex'd with a morbid devil in his blood
That veil'd the world with jaundice, hid his face
From all men, and commercing with himself,
He lost the sense that handles daily life—
That keeps us all in order more or less—
And sick of home went overseas for change.
John. And whither?
James. Nay, who knows? he's here and there.
But let him go; his devil goes with him,
As well as with his tenant, Jocky Dawes.
John. What's that?
James. You saw the man—on Monday, was it?—
There by the humpback'd willow; half stands up
And bristles; half has fall'n and made a bridge;
And there he caught the younker tickling trout—
Caught *in flagrante*—what's the Latin word?—
Delicto: but his house, for so they say,
Was haunted with a jolly ghost, that shook

The curtains, whined in lobbies, tapt at doors,
And rummaged like a rat: no servant stay'd:
The farmer vext packs up his beds and chairs,
And all his household stuff; and with his boy
Betwixt his knees, his wife upon the tilt,
Sets out, and meets a friend who hails him, 'What!
You're flitting!' 'Yes, we're flitting,' says the ghost
(For they had pack'd the thing among the beds,)
'Oh well,' says he, 'you flitting with us too—
Jack, turn the horses' heads and home again.'

John. *He* left *his* wife behind; for so I heard.

James. He left her, yes. I met my lady once:
A woman like a butt, and harsh as crabs.

John. Oh yet but I remember, ten years back—
'Tis now at least ten years—and then she was—
You could not light upon a sweeter thing:
A body slight and round, and like a pear
In growing, modest eyes, a hand, a foot
Lessening in perfect cadence, and a skin
As clean and white as privet when it flowers.

James. Ay, ay, the blossom fades, and they that loved
At first like dove and dove were cat and dog.
She was the daughter of a cottager,
Out of her sphere. What betwixt shame and pride,
New things and old, himself and her, she sour'd
To what she is: a nature never kind!
Like men, like manners: like breeds like, they say:
Kind nature is the best: those manners next
That fit us like a nature second-hand;
Which are indeed the manners of the great.

John. But I had heard it was this bill that past,
And fear of change at home, that drove him hence.

James. That was the last drop in the cup of gall.
I once was near him, when his bailiff brought
A Chartist pike. You should have seen him wince
As from a venomous thing: he thought himself
A mark for all, and shudder'd, lest a cry
Should break his sleep by night, and his nice eyes
Should see the raw mechanic's bloody thumbs
Sweat on his blazon'd chairs; but, sir, you know
That these two parties still divide the world—
Of those that want, and those that have: and still
The same old sore breaks out from age to age
With much the same result. Now I myself,
A Tory to the quick, was as a boy
Destructive, when I had not what I would.
I was at school—a college in the South:
There lived a flayflint near; we stole his fruit,
His hens, his eggs; but there was law for *us*;
We paid in person. He had a sow, sir. She,
With meditative grunts of much content,
Lay great with pig, wallowing in sun and mud.
By night we dragg'd her to the college tower
From her warm bed, and up the corkscrew stair

With hand and rope we haled the groaning sow,
And on the leads we kept her till she pigg'd.
Large range of prospect had the mother sow,
And but for daily loss of one she loved
As one by one we took them—but for this—
As never sow was higher in this world—
Might have been happy: but what lot is pure?
We took them all, till she was left alone
Upon her tower, the Niobe of swine,
And so return'd unfarrow'd to her sty.
John. They found you out?
James. Not they.
John. Well—after all—
What know we of the secret of a man?
His nerves were wrong. What ails us, who are sound,
That we should mimic this raw fool the world,
Which charts us all in its coarse blacks or whites,
As ruthless as a baby with a worm,
As cruel as a schoolboy ere he grows
To Pity—more from ignorance than will.
But put your best foot forward, or I fear
That we shall miss the mail: and here it comes
With five at top: as quaint a four-in-hand
As you shall see—three pyebalds and a roan.

EDWIN MORRIS;

OR, THE LAKE.

O ME, my pleasant rambles by the lake,
My sweet, wild, fresh three quarters of a year,
My one Oasis in the dust and drouth
Of city life! I was a sketcher then:
See here, my doing: curves of mountain, bridge,
Boat, island, ruins of a castle, built
When men knew how to build, upon a rock
With turrets lichen-gilded like a rock:
And here, new-comers in an ancient hold,
New-comers from the Mersey, millionaires,
Here lived the Hills—a Tudor-chimnied bulk
Of mellow brickwork on an isle of bowers.
O me, my pleasant rambles by the lake
With Edwin Morris and with Edward Bull
The curate; he was fatter than his cure.

But Edwin Morris, he that knew the names,
Long learned names of agaric, moss and fern,
Who forged a thousand theories of the rocks,
Who taught me how to skate, to row, to swim,
Who read me rhymes elaborately good,
His own—I call'd him Crichton, for he seem'd
All-perfect, finish'd to the finger nail.

And once I ask'd him of his early life,
And his first passion; and he answer'd me;
And well his words became him: was he not
A full-cell'd honeycomb of eloquence
Stored from all flowers? Poet-like he spoke.

'My love for Nature is as old as I;
But thirty moons, one honeymoon to that,
And three rich sennights more, my love for her.
My love for Nature and my love for her,

Of different ages, like twin-sisters grew,
Twin-sisters differently beautiful.
To some full music rose and sank the sun,
And some full music seem'd to move and change
With all the varied changes of the dark,
And either twilight and the day between;
For daily hope fulfill'd, to rise again
Revolving toward fulfilment, made it sweet
To walk, to sit, to sleep, to wake, to breathe.'

Or this or something like to this he spoke.
Then said the fat-faced curate Edward Bull,
'I take it, God made the woman for the man,
And for the good and increase of the world.
A pretty face is well, and this is well,
To have a dame indoors, that trims us up,
And keeps us tight; but these unreal ways
Seem but the theme of writers, and indeed
Worn threadbare. Man is made of solid stuff.
I say, God made the woman for the man,
And for the good and increase of the world.'

'Parson,' said I, 'you pitch the pipe too low:
But I have sudden touches, and can run
My faith beyond my practice into his:
Tho' if, in dancing after Letty Hill,
I do not hear the bells upon my cap,
I scarce have other music: yet say on.
What should one give to light on such a dream?'
I ask'd him half-sardonically.
'Give?
Give all thou art,' he answer'd, and a light
Of laughter dimpled in his swarthy cheek;
'I would have hid her needle in my heart,
To save her little finger from a scratch
No deeper than the skin: my ears could hear
Her lightest breath; her least remark was worth
The experience of the wise. I went and came;
Her voice fled always thro' the summer land;
I spoke her name alone. Thrice-happy days!
The flower of each, those moments when we met,
The crown of all, we met to part no more.'

Were not his words delicious, I a beast
To take them as I did? but something jarr'd;
Whether he spoke too largely; that there seem'd
A touch of something false, some self-conceit,
Or over-smoothness: howsoe'er it was,
He scarcely hit my humor, and I [illegible]:

'Friend Edwin, do not think yourself alone
Of all men happy. Shall not Love to me,
As in the Latin song I learnt at school,
Sneeze out a full God-bless-you right and left?
But you can talk: yours is a kindly vein:
I have, I think,—Heaven knows—as much within;
Have, or should have, but for a thought or two,
That like a purple beech among the greens
Looks out of place: 'tis from no want in her:
It is my shyness, or my self-distrust,
Or something of a wayward modern mind

Dissecting passion. Time will set me right.'

So spoke I knowing not the things that were.
Then said the fat-faced curate, Edward Bull:
'God made the woman for the use of man,
And for the good and increase of the world.'
And I and Edwin laughed; and now we paused
About the windings of the marge to hear
The soft wind blowing over meadowy holms
And alders, garden-isles; and now we left
The clerk behind us, I and he, and ran
By ripply shallows of the lisping lake,
Delighted with the freshness and the sound.

But, when the bracken rusted on their crags,
My suit had wither'd, nipt to death by him
That was a God, and is a lawyer's clerk,
The rentroll Cupid of our rainy isles.
'Tis true, we met; one hour I had, no more:
She sent a note, the seal an *Elle vous suit*,
The close, 'Your Letty, only yours;' and this
Thrice underscored. The friendly mist of morn
Clung to the lake. I boated over, ran
My craft aground, and heard with beating heart
The Sweet-Gale rustle round the shelving keel;
And out I stept, and up I crept: she moved,
Like Proserpine in Enna, gathering flowers:
Then low and sweet I whistled thrice; and she,
She turn'd, we closed, we kiss'd, swore faith, I breathed
In some new planet: a silent cousin stole
Upon us and departed: 'Leave,' she cried,
'O leave me!' 'Never, dearest, never: here
I brave the worst:' and while we stood like fools
Embracing, all at once a score of pugs
And poodles yell'd within, and out they came
Trustees and Aunts and Uncles. 'What, with him!
Go' (shrill'd the cotton-spinning chorus); 'him!'
I choked. Again they shriek'd the burthen—'Him!'
Again with hands of wild rejection 'Go!—
Girl, get you in!' She went—and in one month
They wedded her to sixty thousand pounds,
To lands in Kent and messuages in York,
And slight Sir Robert with his watery smile
And educated whisker. But for me,
They set an ancient creditor to work:
It seems I broke a close with force and arms:
There came a mystic token from the king
To greet the sheriff, needless courtesy!
I read, and fled by night, and flying turn'd:
Her taper glimmer'd in the lake below:
I turn'd once more, close-button'd to the storm;
So left the place, left Edwin, nor have seen
Him since, nor heard of her, nor cared to hear.

Nor cared to hear? perhaps: yet long ago
I have pardon'd little Letty; not indeed,
It may be, for her own dear sake but this,

She seems a part of those fresh days
to me;
For in the dust and drouth of London life
She moves among my visions of the lake,
While the prime swallow dips his wing, or then
While the gold-lily blows, and overhead
The light cloud smoulders on the summer crag.

ST. SIMEON STYLITES.

ALTHO' I be the basest of mankind,
From scalp to sole one slough and crust of sin,
Unfit for earth, unfit for heaven, scarce meet
For troops of devils, mad with blasphemy,
I will not cease to grasp the hope I hold
Of saintdom, and to clamor, mourn and sob,
Battering the gates of heaven with storms of prayer,
Have mercy, Lord, and take away my sin.
Let this avail, just, dreadful, mighty God,
This not be all in vain, that thrice ten years,
Thrice multiplied by superhuman pangs,
In hungers and in thirsts, fevers and cold,
In coughs, aches, stitches, ulcerous throes and cramps,
A sign betwixt the meadow and the cloud,
Patient on this tall pillar I have borne
Rain, wind, frost, heat, hail, damp, and sleet, and snow;
And I had hoped that ere this period closed
Thou wouldst have caught me up into thy rest,
Denying not these weather-beaten limbs
The meed of saints, the white robe and the palm.
O take the meaning, Lord: I do not breathe,
Not whisper, any murmur of complaint.
Pain heap'd ten-hundred-fold to this, were still
Less burthen, by ten-hundred-fold, to bear,
Than were those lead-like tons of sin, that crush'd
My spirit flat before thee.
O Lord, Lord,
Thou knowest I bore this better at the first,
For I was strong and hale of body then;
And tho' my teeth, which now are dropt away,
Would chatter with the cold, and all my beard
Was tagg'd with icy fringes in the moon,
I drown'd the whoopings of the owl with sound
Of pious hymns and [illegible]lms, and sometimes saw
An angel stand and watch me, as I sang.
Now am I feeble grown; my end draws nigh;
I hope my end draws nigh: half deaf I am,
So that I scarce can hear the people hum
About the column's base, and almost blind,
And scarce can recognize the fields I know;
And both my thighs are rotted with the dew;
Yet cease I not to clamor and to cry,
While my stiff spine can hold my weary head,
Till all my limbs drop piecemeal from the stone,
Have mercy, mercy: take away my sin.
O Jesus, if thou wilt not save my soul,
Who may be saved? who is it may be saved?

Who may be made a saint, if I fail here?
Show me the man hath suffer'd more than I.
For did not all thy martyrs die one death?
For either they were stoned, or crucified,
Or burn'd in fire, or boil'd in oil, or sawn
In twain beneath the ribs; but I die here
To-day, and whole years long, a life of death.
Bear witness, if I could have found a way
(And heedfully I sifted all my thought)
More slowly-painful to subdue this home
Of sin, my flesh, which I despise and hate,
I had not stinted practice, O my God.
For not alone this pillar-punishment,
Not this alone I bore: but while I lived
In the white convent down the valley there,
For many weeks about my loins I wore
The rope that haled the buckets from the well,
Twisted as tight as I could knot the noose;
And spake not of it to a single soul,
Until the ulcer, eating thro' my skin,
Betray'd my secret penance, so that all
My brethren marvell'd greatly. More than this
I bore, whereof, O God, thou knowest all.
Three winters, that my soul might grow to thee,
I lived up there on yonder mountain side.
My right leg chain'd into the crag, I lay
Pent in a roofless close of ragged stones;
Inswathed sometimes in wandering mist, and twice
Black'd with thy branding thunder, and sometimes
Sucking the damps for drink, and eating not,
Except the spare chance-gift of those that came
To touch my body and be heal'd, and live:
And they say then that I work'd miracles,
Whereof my fame is loud amongst mankind,
Cured lameness, palsies, cancers. Thou, O God,
Knowest alone whether this was or no.
Have mercy, mercy! cover all my sin.
Then, that I might be more alone with thee,
Three years I lived upon a pillar, high
Six cubits, and three years on one of twelve;
And twice three years I crouch'd on one that rose
Twenty by measure; last of all, I grew
Twice ten long weary weary years to this,
That numbers forty cubits from the soil.
I think that I have borne as much as this—
Or else I dream—and for so long a time,
If I may measure time by yon slow light,
And this high dial, which my sorrow crowns—
So much—even so.
And yet I know not well,
For that the evil ones come here, and say,
'Fall down, O Simeon: thou hast suffer'd long
For ages and for ages!' then they prate
Of penances I cannot have gone thro',
Perplexing me with lies; and oft I fall,
Maybe for months, in such blind lethargies
That Heaven, and Earth, and Time are choked.
But yet
Bethink thee, Lord, while thou and all the saints

Enjoy themselves in heaven, and men on earth
House in the shade of comfortable roofs,
Sit with their wives by fires, eat wholesome food,
And wear warm clothes, and even beasts have stalls,
I, 'tween the spring and downfall of the light,
Bow down one thousand and two hundred times,
To Christ, the Virgin Mother, and the saints;
Or in the night, after a little sleep,
I wake: the chill stars sparkle; I am wet
With drenching dews, or stiff with crackling frost.
I wear an undress'd goatskin on my back;
A grazing iron collar grinds my neck;
And in my weak, lean arms I lift the cross,
And strive and wrestle with thee till I die:
O mercy, mercy! wash away my sin.
O Lord, thou knowest what a man I am;
A sinful man, conceived and born in sin:
'Tis their own doing; this is none of mine;
Lay it not to me. Am I to blame for this,
That here come those that worship me? Ha! ha!
They think that I am somewhat. What am I?
The silly people take me for a saint,
And bring me offerings of fruit and flowers:
And I, in truth (thou wilt bear witness here)
Have all in all endured as much, and more
Than many just and holy men, whose names
Are register'd and calendar'd for saints.
Good people, you do ill to kneel to me.
What is it I can have done to merit this?
I am a sinner viler than you all.
It may be I have wrought some miracles,
And cured some halt and maim'd; but what of that?
It may be, no one, even among the saints,
May match his pains with mine; but what of that?
Yet do not rise; for you may look on me,
And in your looking you may kneel to God.
Speak! is there any of you halt or maim'd?
I think you know I have some power with Heaven
From my long penance: let him speak his wish.
Yes, I can heal him. Power goes forth from me.
They say that they are heal'd. Ah, hark! they shout
'St. Simeon Stylites.' Why, if so,
God reaps a harvest in me. O my soul,
God reaps a harvest in thee. If this be,
Can I work miracles and not be saved?
This is not told of any. They were saints.
It cannot be but that I shall be saved;
Yea, crown'd a saint. They shout, 'Behold a saint!'
And lower voices saint me from above.
Courage, St. Simeon! This dull chrysalis
Cracks into shining wings, and hope ere death
Spreads more and more and more, that God hath now
Sponged and made blank of crimeful record all
My mortal archives.
O my sons, my sons,
I, Simeon of the pillar, by surname
Stylites, among men; I, Simeon,
The watcher on the column till the end;
I, Simeon, whose brain the sunshine bakes;

I, whose bald brows in silent hours become
Unnaturally hoar with rime, do now
From my high nest of penance here proclaim
That Pontius and Iscariot by my side
Show'd like fair seraphs. On the coals I lay,
A vessel full of sin: all hell beneath
Made me boil over. Devils pluck'd my sleeve,
Abaddon and Asmodeus caught at me.
I smote them with the cross; they swarm'd again.
In bed like monstrous apes they crush'd my chest:
They flapp'd my light out as I read: I saw
Their faces grow between me and my book;
With colt-like whinny and with hog-gish whine
They burst my prayer. Yet this way was left,
And by this way I 'scaped them. Mortify
Your flesh, like me, with scourges and with thorns;
Smite, shrink not, spare not. If it may be, fast
Whole Lents, and pray. I hardly, with slow steps,
With slow, faint steps, and much exceeding pain,
Have scrambled past those pits of fire, that still
Sing in mine ears. But yield not me the praise:
God only thro' his bounty hath thought fit,
Among the powers and princes of this world,
To make me an example to mankind,
Which few can reach to. Yet I do not say
But that a time may come—yea, even now,
Now, now, his footsteps smite the threshold stairs
Of life—I say, that time is at the doors
When you may worship me without reproach;
For I will leave my relics in your land,
And you may carve a shrine about my dust,
And burn a fragrant lamp before my bones,
When I am gather'd to the glorious saints.
While I spake then, a sting of shrewdest pain
Ran shrivelling thro' me, and a cloud-like change,
In passing, with a grosser film made thick
These heavy, horny eyes. The end! the end!
Surely the end! What's here? a shape, a shade,
A flash of light. Is that the angel there
That holds a crown? Come, blessed brother, come.
I know thy glittering face. I waited long;
My brows are ready. What! deny it now?
Nay, draw, draw, draw nigh. So I clutch it. Christ!
'Tis gone: 'tis here again; the crown! the crown!
So now 'tis fitted on and grows to me,
And from it melt the dews of Paradise,
Sweet! sweet! spikenard, and balm, and frankincense.
Ah! let me not be fool'd, sweet saints: I trust
That I am whole, and clean, and meet for Heaven.
Speak, if there be a priest, a man of God,
Among you there, and let him presently
Approach, and lean a ladder on the shaft,
And climbing up into my airy home,
Deliver me the blessed sacrament;
For by the warning of the Holy Ghost,
I prophesy that I shall die to-night,
A quarter before twelve.
But thou, O Lord,
Aid all this foolish people; let them take
Example, pattern: lead them to thy light.

"I SEE THE MOULDER'D ABBEY-WALLS."—*Page 69.*

THE TALKING OAK.

ONCE more the gate behind me falls;
Once more before my face
I see the moulder'd Abbey-walls,
That stand within the chace.

Beyond the lodge the city lies,
Beneath its drift of smoke;
And ah! with what delighted eyes
I turn to yonder oak.

For when my passion first began,
Ere that, which in me burn'd,
The love, that makes me thrice a man,
Could hope itself return'd;

To yonder oak within the field
I spoke without restraint,
And with a larger faith appeal'd
Than Papist unto Saint

For oft I talk'd with him apart,
And told him of my choice,
Until he plagiarized a heart,
And answer'd with a voice.

Tho' what he whisper'd under Heaven
None else could understand;
I found him garrulously given,
A babbler in the land.

But since I heard him make reply
Is many a weary hour;
'Twere well to question him, and try
If yet he keeps the power.

Hail, hidden to the knees in fern,
Broad Oak of Sumner-chace,
Whose topmost branches can discern
The roofs of Sumner-place!

Say thou, whereon I carved her name,
If ever maid or spouse,
As fair as my Olivia, came
To rest beneath thy boughs.—

'O Walter, I have shelter'd here
Whatever maiden grace
The good old Summers, year by year
Made ripe in Sumner-chace:

'Old Summers, when the monk was fat,
And, issuing shorn and sleek,
Would twist his girdle tight, and pat
The girls upon the cheek,

'Ere yet, in scorn of Peter's-pence,
And number'd bead, and shrift,
Bluff Harry broke into the spence
And turn'd the cowls adrift:

'And I have seen some score of those
Fresh faces, that would thrive
When his man-minded offset rose
To chase the deer at five;

'And all that from the town would stroll,
Till that wild wind made work
In which the gloomy brewer's soul
Went by me, like a stork:

'The slight she-slips of loyal blood,
And others, passing praise,
Strait-laced, but all-too-full in bud
For puritanic stays:

'And I have shadow'd many a group
Of beauties, that were born
In teacup-times of hood and hoop,
Or while the patch was worn;

'And, leg and arm with love-knots gay,
About me leap'd and laugh'd
The modish Cupid of the day,
And shrill'd his tinsel shaft.

'I swear (and else may insects prick
Each leaf into a gall)
This girl, for whom your heart is sick,
Is three times worth them all;

'For those and theirs, by Nature's law,
Have faded long ago;
But in these latter springs I saw
Your own Olivia blow,

'From when she gamboll'd on the greens
A baby-germ, to when
The maiden blossoms of her teens
Could number five from ten.

'I swear, by leaf, and wind, and rain,
(And hear me with thine ears,)
That, tho' I circle in the grain
Five hundred rings of years—

'Yet, since I first could cast a shade,
Did never creature pass
So slightly, musically made,
So light upon the grass:

'For as to fairies, that will flit
To make the greensward fresh,
I hold them exquisitely knit,
But far too spare of flesh.'

Oh, hide thy knotted knees in fern,
And overlook the chace;
And from thy topmost branch discern
The roofs of Sumner-place.

But thou, whereon I carved her name,
That oft hast heard my vows,
Declare when last Olivia came
To sport beneath thy boughs.

'O yesterday, you know, the fair
Was holden at the town;
Her father left his good arm-chair,
And rode his hunter down.

'And with him Albert came on his.
I look'd at him with joy:
As cowslip unto oxlip is,
So seems she to the boy.

'An hour had past—and, sitting straight
Within the low-wheel'd chaise,
Her mother trundled to the gate
Behind the dappled grays.

'But as for her, she stay'd at home,
And on the roof she went,
And down the way you used to come,
She look'd with discontent.

'She left the novel half-uncut
Upon the rosewood shelf;
She left the new piano shut:
She could not please herself.

'Then ran she, gamesome as the colt,
And livelier than a lark
She sent her voice thro' all the holt
Before her, and the park.

'A light wind chased her on the wing,
And in the chase grew wild,
As close as might be would he cling
About the darling child:

'But light as any wind that blows
So fleetly did she stir,
The flower, she touch'd on, dipt and rose,
And turn'd to look at her.

'And here she came, and round me play'd,
And sang to me the whole
Of those three stanzas that you made
About my "giant bole;"

'And in a fit of frolic mirth
She strove to span my waist:
Alas, I was so broad of girth,
I could not be embraced.

'I wish'd myself the fair young beech
That here beside me stands,
That round me, clasping each in each,
She might have lock'd her hands.

'Yet seem'd the pressure thrice as sweet
As woodbine's fragile hold,
Or when I feel about my feet
The berried briony fold.'

O muffle round thy knees with fern,
And shadow Sumner-chace!
Long may thy topmost branch discern
The roofs of Sumner-place!

But tell me, did she read the name
I carved with many vows
When last with throbbing heart I came
To rest beneath thy boughs?

'O yes, she wander'd round and round
These knotted knees of mine,
And found, and kiss'd the name she found,
And sweetly murmur'd thine.

'A teardrop trembled from its source,
And down my surface crept.
My sense of touch is something coarse,
But I believe she wept.

'Then flush'd her cheek with rosy light,
She glanced across the plain;
But not a creature was in sight:
She kiss'd me once again.

'Her kisses were so close and kind,
That, trust me on my word,
Hard wood I am, and wrinkled rind,
But yet my sap was stirr'd:

'And even into my inmost ring
A pleasure I discern'd,
Like those blind motions of the Spring,
That show the year is turn'd.

'Thrice-happy he that may caress
The ringlet's waving balm—
The cushions of whose touch may press
The maiden's tender palm.

'I, rooted here among the groves
But languidly adjust
My vapid vegetable loves
With anthers and with dust:

'For ah! my friend, the days were brief
Whereof the poets talk,
When that, which breathes within the leaf,
Colud slip its bark and walk.

'But could I, as in times foregone,
From spray, and branch, and stem,
Have suck'd and gather'd into one
The life that spreads in them,

'She had not found me so remiss;
But lightly issuing thro',
I would have paid her kiss for kiss,
With usury thereto.'

O flourish high, with leafy towers,
And overlook the lea,
Pursue thy loves among the bowers
But leave thou mine to me.

O flourish, hidden deep in fern,
Old oak, I love thee well;
A thousand thanks for what I learn
And what remains to tell.

''Tis little more: the day was warm;
At last, tired out with play,
She sank her head upon her arm
And at my feet she lay.

'Her eyelids dropp'd their silken eaves.
I breathed upon her eyes
Thro' all the summer of my leaves
A welcome mix'd with sighs.

'I took the swarming sound of life—
The music from the town—
The murmurs of the drum and fife
And lull'd them in my own.

'Sometimes I let a sunbeam slip,
To light her shaded eye;
A second flutter'd round her lip
Like a golden butterfly;

'A third would glimmer on her neck
To make the necklace shine;
Another slid, a sunny fleck,
From head to ancle fine,

'Then close and dark my arms I spread,
And shadow'd all her rest—
Dropt dews upon her golden head,
An acorn in her breast.

'But in a pet she started up,
And pluck'd it out, and drew
My little oakling from the cup,
And flung him in the dew.

'And yet it was a graceful gift—
I felt a pang within
As when I see the woodman lift
His axe to slay my kin.

'I shook him down because he was
The finest on the tree.
He lies beside thee on the grass.
O kiss him once for me.

'O kiss him twice and thrice for me,
That have no lips to kiss,
For never yet was oak on lea
Shall grow so fair as this.'

Step deeper yet in herb and fern,
Look further thro' the chace,
Spread upward till thy boughs discern
The front of Sumner-place.

This fruit of thine by Love is blest,
That but a moment lay
Where fairer fruit of Love may rest
Some happy future day.

I kiss it twice, I kiss it thrice,
The warmth it thence shall win
To riper life may magnetize
The baby-oak within.

But thou, while kingdoms overset,
Or lapse from hand to hand,
Thy leaf shall never fail, nor yet
Thine acorn in the land.

May never saw dismember thee,
Nor wielded axe disjoint,
That art the fairest-spoken tree
From here to Lizard-point.

O rock upon thy towery-top
All throats that gurgle sweet!
All starry culmination drop
Balm-dews to bathe thy feet!

All grass of silky feather grow—
And while he sinks or swells
The full south-breeze around thee blow
The sound of minster bells.

The fat earth feed thy branchy root,
That under deeply strikes!
The northern morning o'er thee shoot,
High up, in silver spikes!

Nor ever lightning char thy grain,
But, rolling as in sleep,
Low thunders bring the mellow rain,
That makes thee broad and deep!

And hear me swear a solemn oath,
That only by thy side
Will I to Olive plight my troth,
And gain her for my bride.

And when my marriage morn may fall,
She, Dryad-like, shall wear
Alternate leaf and acorn-ball
In wreath about her hair.

And I will work in prose and rhyme,
And praise thee more in both
Than bard has honor'd beech or lime,
Or that Thessalian growth,

In which the swarthy ringdove sat,
And mystic sentence spoke;
And more than England honors that,
Thy famous brother-oak,

Wherein the younger Charles abode
Till all the paths were dim,
And far below the Roundhead rode,
And humm'd a surly hymn.

LOVE AND DUTY.

Of love that never found his earthly close,
What sequel? Streaming eyes and breaking hearts?
Or all the same as if he had not been?
Not so. Shall Error in the round of time
Still father Truth? O shall the braggart shout
For some blind glimpse of freedom work itself
Thro' madness, hated by the wise, to law
System and empire? Sin itself be found
The cloudy porch oft opening on the Sun?
And only he, this wonder, dead, become
Mere highway dust? or year by year alone
Sit brooding in the ruins of a life,
Nightmare of youth, the spectre of himself?
If this were thus, if this, indeed, were all,

Better the narrow brain, the stony heart,
The staring eye glazed o'er with sapless days,
The long mechanic pacings to and fro,
The set gray life, and apathetic end.
But am I not the nobler thro' thy love?
O three times less unworthy! likewise thou
Art more thro' Love, and greater than thy years,
The Sun will run his orbit, and the Moon
Her circle. Wait, and Love himself will bring
The drooping flower of knowledge changed to fruit
Of wisdom. Wait: my faith is large in Time,
And that which shapes it to some perfect end.
Will some one say, Then why not ill for good?
Why took ye not your pastime? To that man
My work shall answer, since I knew the right
And did it; for a man is not as God,
But then most Godlike being most a man.
—So let me think 'tis well for thee and me—
Ill-fated that I am, what lot is mine
Whose foresight preaches peace, my heart so slow
To feel it! For how hard it seem'd to me,
When eyes, love-languid thro' half tears would dwell
One earnest, earnest moment upon mine,
Then not to dare to see! when thy low voice,
Faltering, would break its syllables, to keep
My own full-tuned,—hold passion in a leash,
And not leap forth and fall about thy neck,
And on thy bosom (deep desired relief!)
Rain out the heavy mist of tears, that weigh'd
Upon my brain, my senses and my soul!
For Love himself took part against himself
To warn us off, and Duty loved of Love—
O this world's curse,—beloved but hated—came
Like Death betwixt thy dear embrace and mine,
And crying, 'Who is this? behold thy bride,'
She push'd me from thee.
If the sense is hard
To alien ears, I did not speak to these—
No, not to thee, but to thyself in me:
Hard is my doom and thine: thou knowest it all.
Could Love part thus? was it not well to speak,
To have spoken once? It could not but be well.
The slow sweet hours that bring us all things good,
The slow sad hours that bring us all things ill,
And all good things from evil, brought the night
In which we sat together and alone,
And to the want, that hollow'd all the heart,
Gave utterance by the yearning of an eye,
That burn'd upon its object thro' such tears
As flow but once a life.
The trance gave way
To those caresses, when a hundred times
In that last kiss, which never was the last,
Farewell, like endless welcome, lived and died.
Then follow'd counsel, comfort, and the words
That make a man feel strong in speaking truth;
Till now the dark was worn, and overhead

The lights of sunset and of sunrise mix'd
In that brief night; the summer night, that paused
Among her stars to hear us; stars that hung
Love-charm'd to listen: all the wheels of Time
Spun round in station, but the end had come.
O then like those, who clench their nerves to rush
Upon their dissolution, we two rose,
There—closing like an individual life—
In one blind cry of passion and of pain,
Like bitter accusation ev'n to death,
Caught up the whole of love and utter'd it,
And bade adieu for ever.
Live—yet live—
Shall sharpest pathos blight us, knowing all
Life needs for life is possible to will—
Live happy; tend thy flowers; be tended by
My blessing! Should my Shadow cross thy thoughts
Too sadly for their peace, remand it thou
For calmer hours to Memory's darkest hold,
If not to be forgotten—not at once—
Not all forgotten. Should it cross thy dreams,
O might it come like one that looks content,
With quiet eyes unfaithful to the truth,
And point thee forward to a distant light,
Or seem to lift a burthen from thy heart
And leave thee freer, till thou wake refresh'd
Then when the first low matin-chirp hath grown
Full quire, and morning driv'n her plow of pearl
Far furrowing into light the mounded rack,
Beyond the fair green field and eastern sea.

THE GOLDEN YEAR.

Well, you shall have that song which Leonard wrote:
It was last summer on a tour in Wales:
Old James was with me: we that day had been
Up Snowdon; and I wish'd for Leonard there,
And found him in Llanberis: then we crost
Between the lakes, and clamber'd half way up
The counter side; and that same song of his
He told me; for I banter'd him, and swore
They said he lived shut up within himself,
A tongue-tied Poet in the feverous days,
That, setting the *how much* before the *how*,
Cry, like the daughters of the horse-leech, 'Give,
Cram us with all,' but count not me the herd!
To which 'They call me what they will,' he said:
'But I was born too late: the fair new forms,
That float about the threshold of an age,
Like truths of Science waiting to be caught—
Catch me who can, and make the catcher crown'd—
Are taken by the forelock. Let it be.
But if you care indeed to listen, hear
These measured words, my work of yestermorn.
'We sleep and wake and sleep, but all things move;
The Sun flies forward to his brother Sun;
The dark Earth follows wheel'd in her ellipse;
And human things returning on themselves
Move onward, leading up the golden year.

'Ah, tho' the times, when some new thought can bud,
Are but as poets' seasons when they flower,
Yet oceans daily gaining on the land,
Have ebb and flow conditioning their march,
And slow and sure comes up the golden year.
'When wealth no more shall rest in mounded heaps,
But smit with freër light shall slowly melt
In many streams to fatten lower lands,
And light shall spread, and man be liker man
Thro' all the season of the golden year.
'Shall eagles not be eagles? wrens be wrens?
If all the world were falcons, what of that?
The wonder of the eagle were the less,
But he not less the eagle. Happy days
Roll onward, leading up the golden year.
'Fly, happy happy sails, and bear the Press;
Fly happy with the mission of the Cross;
Knit land to land, and blowing havenward
With silks, and fruits, and spices, clear of toll,
Enrich the markets of the golden year.
'But we grow old. Ah! when shall all men's good
Be each man's rule, and universal Peace
Lie like a shaft of light across the land,
And like a lane of beams athwart the sea,
Thro' all the circle of the golden year?'
Thus far he flow'd, and ended; whereupon
'Ah, folly!' in mimic cadence answer'd James—
'Ah, folly! for it lies so far away,
Not in our time, nor in our children's time,
'Tis like the second world to us that live;
'Twere all as one to fix our hopes on Heaven
As on this vision of the golden year.'
With that he struck his staff against the rocks
And broke it,—James,—you know him,—old, but full
Of force and choler, and firm upon his feet,
And like an oaken stock in winter woods,
O'erflourish'd with the hoary clematis:
Then added, all in heat:
'What stuff is this!
Old writers push'd the happy season back,—
The more fools they,—we forward: dreamers both:
You most, that in an age, when every hour
Must sweat her sixty minutes to the death,
Live on, God love us, as if the seedsman, rapt
Upon the teeming harvest, should not plunge
His hand into the bag: but well I know
That unto him who works, and feels he works,
This same grand year is ever at the doors.'
He spoke; and, high above, I heard them blast
The steep slate-quarry, and the great echo flap
And buffet round the hills, from bluff to bluff.

ULYSSES.

It little profits that an idle king.
By this still hearth, among these barren crags,
Match'd with an aged wife, I mete and dole
Unequal laws unto a savage race,
That hoard, and sleep, and feed, and know not me.

I cannot rest from travel: I will drink
Life to the lees: all times I have enjoy'd
Greatly, have suffer'd greatly, both with those
That loved me, and alone; on shore, and when
Thro' scudding drifts the rainy Hyades
Vext the dim sea: I am become a name;
For always roaming with a hungry heart
Much have I seen and known; cities of men
And manners, climates, councils, governments,
Myself not least, but honor'd of them all;
And drunk delight of battle with my peers,
Far on the ringing plains of windy Troy.
I am a part of all that I have met;
Yet all experience is an arch where-thro'
Gleams that untravell'd world, whose margin fades
For ever and for ever when I move.
How dull it is to pause, to make an end,
To rust unburnish'd, not to shine in use!
As though to breathe were life. Life piled on life
Were all too little, and of one to me
Little remains: but every hour is saved
From that eternal silence, something more,
A bringer of new things; and vile it were
For some three suns to store and hoard myself,
And this gray spirit yearning in desire
To follow knowledge like a sinking star,
Beyond the utmost bound of human thought.
This is my son, mine own Telemachus,
To whom I leave the sceptre and the isle—
Well-loved of me, discerning to fulfil
This labor, by slow prudence to make mild
A rugged people, and thro' soft degrees
Subdue them to the useful and the good.
Most blameless is he, centred in the sphere
Of common duties, decent not to fail
In offices of tenderness, and pay
Meet adoration to my household gods,
When I am gone. He works his work, I mine.
There lies the port; the vessel puffs her sail:
There gloom the dark broad seas. My mariners,
Souls that have toil'd, and wrought, and thought with me—
That ever with a frolic welcome took
The thunder and the sunshine, and opposed
Free hearts, free foreheads—you and I are old;
Old age hath yet his honor and his toil;
Death closes all: but something ere the end,
Some work of noble note, may yet be done,
Not unbecoming men that strove with Gods.
The lights begin to twinkle from the rocks:
The long day wanes: the slow moon climbs: the deep
Moans round with many voices. Come, my friends,
'Tis not too late to seek a newer world.
Push off, and sitting well in order smite
The sounding furrows; for my purpose holds
To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths
Of all the western stars, until I die.
It may be that the gulfs will wash us down:
It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles,
And see the great Achilles, whom we knew.

Tho' much is taken, much abides; and tho'
We are not now that strength which in old days
Moved earth and heaven; that which we are, we are;
One equal temper of heroic hearts,
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.

TITHONUS.

THE woods decay, the woods decay and fall,
The vapors weep their burthen to the ground,
Man comes and tills the field and lies beneath,
And after many a summer dies the swan.
Me only cruel immortality
Consumes: I wither slowly in thine arms,
Here at the quiet limit of the world,
A white-hair'd shadow roaming like a dream
The ever-silent spaces of the East,
Far-folded mists, and gleaming halls of morn.

Alas! for this gray shadow, once a man—
So glorious in his beauty and thy choice,
Who madest him thy chosen, that he seem'd
To his great heart none other than a God!
I ask'd thee, 'Give me immortality.'
Then didst thou grant mine asking with a smile,
Like wealthy men who care not how they give.
But thy strong Hours indignant work'd their wills,
And beat me down and marr'd and wasted me,
And tho' they could not end me, left me maim'd
To dwell in presence of immortal youth,
Immortal age beside immortal youth,
And all I was, in ashes. Can thy love,
Thy beauty, make amends, tho' even now,
Close over us, the silver star, thy guide,
Shines in those tremulous eyes that fill with tears
To hear me? Let me go: take back thy gift:
Why should a man desire in any way
To vary from the kindly race of men,
Or pass beyond the goal of ordinance
Where all should pause, as is most meet for all?

A soft air fans the cloud apart; there comes
A glimpse of that dark world where I was born.
Once more the old mysterious glimmer steals
From thy pure brows, and from thy shoulders pure,
And bosom beating with a heart renew'd.
Thy cheek begins to redden thro' the gloom,
Thy sweet eyes brighten slowly close to mine,
Ere yet they blind the stars, and the wild team
Which love thee, yearning for thy yoke, arise,
And shake the darkness from their loosen'd manes,
And beat the twilight into flakes of fire.

Lo! ever thus thou growest beautiful
In silence, then before thine answer given
Departest, and thy tears are on my cheek.

Why wilt thou ever scare me with thy tears,

And make me tremble lest a saying learnt,
In days far-off, on that dark earth, be true?
'The Gods themselves cannot recall their gifts.'

Ay me! ay me! with what another heart
In days far-off, and with what other eyes
I used to watch—if I be he that watch'd—
The lucid outline forming round thee; saw
The dim curls kindle into sunny rings;
Changed with thy mystic change, and felt my blood
Glow with the glow that slowly crimson'd all
Thy presence and thy portals, while I lay,
Mouth, forehead, eyelids, growing dewy-warm
With kisses balmier than half-opening buds
Of April, and could hear the lips that kiss'd
Whispering I knew not what of wild and sweet,
Like that strange song I heard Apollo sing,
While Ilion like a mist rose into towers.

Yet hold me not for ever in thine East:
How can my nature longer mix with thine?
Coldly thy rosy shadows bathe me, cold
Are all thy lights, and cold my wrinkled feet
Upon thy glimmering thresholds, when the steam
Floats up from those dim fields about the homes
Of happy men that have the power to die,
And grassy barrows of the happier dead.
Release me, and restore me to the ground;
Thou seëst all things, thou wilt see my grave:
Thou wilt renew thy beauty morn by morn;
I earth in earth forget these empty courts,
And thee returning on thy silver heels.

LOCKSLEY HALL.

COMRADES, leave me here a little, while as yet 'tis early morn:
Leave me here, and when you want me, sound upon the bugle-horn.

'Tis the place, and all around it, as of old, the curlews call,
Dreary gleams about the moorland flying over Locksley Hall;

Locksley Hall, that in the distance overlooks the sandy tracts,
And the hollow ocean-ridges roaring into cataracts.

Many a night from yonder ivied casement, ere I went to rest,
Did I look on great Orion sloping slowly to the West.

Many a night I saw the Pleiads, rising thro' the mellow shade,
Glitter like a swarm of fire-flies tangled in a silver braid.

Here about the beach I wander'd, nourishing a youth sublime
With the fairy tales of science, and the long result of Time;

When the centuries behind me like a fruitful land reposed ;
When I clung to all the present for the promise that it closed :

When I dipt into the future far as human eye could see ;
Saw the Vision of the world, and all the wonder that would be.

In the Spring a fuller crimson comes upon the robin's breast ;
In the Spring the wanton lapwing gets himself another crest ;

In the Spring a livelier iris changes on the burnish'd dove ;
In the Spring a young man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of love.

Then her cheek was pale and thinner than should be for one so young,
And her eyes on all my motions with a mute observance hung.

And I said, 'My cousin Amy, speak, and speak the truth to me,
Trust me, cousin, all the current of my being sets to thee.'

On her pallid cheek and forehead came a color and a light,
As I have seen the rosy red flushing in the northern night.

And she turn'd—her bosom shaken with a sudden storm of sighs—
All the spirit deeply dawning in the dark of hazel eyes—

Saying, 'I have hid my feelings, fearing they should do me wrong ;'
Saying, 'Dost thou love me, cousin ?' weeping, 'I have loved thee long.'

Love took up the glass of Time, and turn'd it in his glowing hands ;
Every moment, lightly shaken, ran itself in golden sands.

Love took up the harp of Life, and smote on all the chords with might ;
Smote the chord of Self, that, trembling, pass'd in music out of sight.

Many a morning on the moorland did we hear the copses ring,
And her whisper throng'd my pulses with the fulness of the Spring.

Many an evening by the waters did we watch the stately ships,
And our spirits rush'd together at the touching of the lips.

O my cousin, shallow-hearted ! O my Amy, mine no more !
O the dreary, dreary moorland ! O the barren, barren shore !

Falser than all fancy fathoms, falser than all songs have sung,
Puppet to a father's threat, and servile to a shrewish tongue !

Is it well to wish thee happy ?—having known me—to decline
On a range of lower feelings and a narrower heart than mine !

Yet it shall be : thou shalt lower to his level day by day,
What is fine within thee growing coarse to sympathize with clay.

As the husband is, the wife is : thou art mated with a clown,
And the grossness of his nature will have weight to drag thee down.

He will hold thee, when his passion shall have spent its novel force,
Something better than his dog, a little dearer than his horse.

What is this? his eyes are heavy: think not they are glazed with wine.
Go to him: it is thy duty: kiss him: take his hand in thine.

It may be my lord is weary, that his brain is overwrought:
Soothe him with thy finer fancies, touch him with thy lighter thought.

He will answer to the purpose, easy things to understand—
Better thou wert dead before me, tho' I slew thee with my hand!

Better thou and I were lying, hidden from the heart's disgrace,
Roll'd in one another's arms, and silent in a last embrace.

Cursed be the social wants that sin against the strength of youth!
Cursed be the social lies that warp us from the living truth!

Cursed be the sickly forms that err from honest Nature's rule!
Cursed be the gold that gilds the straiten'd forehead of the fool!

Well—'tis well that I should bluster!—Hadst thou less unworthy proved—
Would to God—for I had loved thee more than ever wife was loved.

Am I mad, that I should cherish that which bears but bitter fruit?
I will pluck it from my bosom, tho' my heart be at the root.

Never, tho' my mortal summers to such length of years should come
As the many-winter'd crow that leads the clanging rookery home.

Where is comfort? in division of the records of the mind?
Can I part her from herself, and love her, as I knew her, kind?

I remember one that perish'd: sweetly did she speak and move:
Such a one do I remember, whom to look at was to love.

Can I think of her as dead, and love her for the love she bore?
No—she never loved me truly: love is love for evermore.

Comfort? comfort scorn'd of devils! this is truth the poet sings,
That a sorrow's crown of sorrow is remembering happier things.

Drug thy memories, lest thou learn it, lest thy heart be put to proof,
In the dead unhappy night, and when the rain is on the roof.

Like a dog, he hunts in dreams, and thou art staring at the wall,
Where the dying night-lamp flickers, and the shadows rise and fall.

Then a hand shall pass before thee, pointing to his drunken sleep,
To thy widow'd marriage-pillows, to the tears that thou wilt weep.

Thou shalt hear the 'Never, never,' whisper'd by the phantom years,
And a song from out the distance in the ringing of thine ears;

And an eye shall vex thee, looking ancient kindness on thy pain.
Turn thee, turn thee on thy pillow: get thee to thy rest again.

Nay, but Nature brings thee solace; for a tender voice will cry.
'Tis a purer life than thine; a lip to drain thy trouble dry.

Baby lips will laugh me down: my latest rival brings thee rest.
Baby fingers, waxen touches, press me from the mother's breast.

O, the child too clothes the father with a dearness not his due.
Half is thine and half is his: it will be worthy of the two.

O, I see thee old and formal, fitted to thy petty part,
With a little hoard of maxims preaching down a daughter's heart.

'They were dangerous guides the feelings—she herself was not exempt—
Truly, she herself had suffer'd'—Perish in thy self-contempt!

Overlive it—lower yet—be happy! wherefore should I care?
I myself must mix with action, lest I wither by despair.

What is that which I should turn to, lighting upon days like these?
Every door is barr'd with gold, and opens but to golden keys.

Every gate is throng'd with suitors, all the markets overflow,
I have but an angry fancy: what is that which I should do?

I had been content to perish, falling on the foeman's ground,
When the ranks are roll'd in vapor, and the winds are laid with sound.

But the jingling of the guinea helps the hurt that Honor feels,
And the nations do but murmur, snarling at each other's heels.

Can I but relive in sadness? I will turn that earlier page.
Hide me from my deep emotion, O thou wondrous Mother-Age!

Make me feel the wild pulsation that I felt before the strife,
When I heard my days before me, and the tumult of my life;

Yearning for the large excitement that the coming years would yield,
Eager-hearted as a boy when first he leaves his father's field,

And at night along the dusky highway near and nearer drawn,
Sees in heaven the light of London flaring like a dreary dawn;

And his spirit leaps within him to be gone before him then,
Underneath the light he looks at, in among the throngs of men:

Men, my brothers, men the workers, ever reaping something new:
That which they have done but earnest of the things that they shall do:

For I dipt into the future, far as human eye could see,
Saw the Vision of the world, and all the wonder that would be;

Saw the heavens fill with commerce, argosies of magic sails,
Pilots of the purple twilight, dropping down with costly bales;

Heard the heavens fill with shouting, and there rain'd a ghastly dew
From the nations' airy navies grappling in the central blue;

Far along the world-wide whisper of the south-wind rushing warm,
With the standards of the peoples plunging thro' the thunder-storm;

Till the war-drum throbb'd no longer, and the battle-flags were furl'd
In the Parliament of man, the Federation of the world.

There the common sense of most shall hold a fretful realm in awe,
And the kindly earth shall slumber, lapt in universal law.

So I triumph'd ere my passion sweeping thro' me left me dry,
Left me with the palsied heart, and left me with the jaundiced eye;

Eye, to which all order festers, all things here are out of joint:
Science moves, but slowly slowly, creeping on from point to point:

Slowly comes a hungry people, as a lion creeping nigher,
Glares at one that nods and winks behind a slowly-dying fire.

Yet I doubt not thro' the ages one increasing purpose runs,
And the thoughts of men are widen'd with the process of the suns.

What is that to him that reaps not harvest of his youthful joys,
Tho' the deep heart of existence beat forever like a boy's?

Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers, and I linger on the shore,
And the individual withers, and the world is more and more.

Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers, and he bears a laden breast,
Full of sad experience, moving toward the stillness of his rest.

Hark, my merry comrades call me, sounding on the bugle-horn,
They to whom my foolish passion were a target for their scorn:

Shall it not be scorn to me to harp on such a moulder'd string?
I am shamed thro' all my nature to have loved so slight a thing.

Weakness to be wroth with weakness! woman's pleasure, woman's pain—
Nature made them blinder motions bounded in a shallower brain:

Woman is the lesser man, and all thy passions, match'd with mine,
Are as moonlight unto sunlight, and as water unto wine—

Here at least, where nature sickens, nothing. Ah, for some retreat
Deep in yonder shining Orient, where my life began to beat;

Where in wild Mahratta-battle fell my father evil-starr'd;—
I was left a trampled orphan, and a selfish uncle's ward.

Or to burst all links of habit—there to wander far away,
On from island unto island at the gateways of the day.

Larger constellations burning, mellow moons and happy skies,
Breadths of tropic shade and palms in cluster, knots of Paradise.

Never comes the trader, never floats an European flag,
Slides the bird o'er lustrous woodland, swings the trailer from the crag;

Droops the heavy-blossom'd bower, hangs the heavy-fruited tree—
Summer isles of Eden lying in dark-purple spheres of sea.

There methinks would be enjoyment more than in this march of mind,
In the steamship, in the railway, in the thoughts that shake mankind.

There the passions cramp'd no longer shall have scope and breathing space;
I will take some savage woman, she shall rear my dusky race.

Iron jointed, supple-sinew'd, they shall dive, and they shall run,
Catch the wild goat by the hair, and hurl their lances in the sun;

Whistle back the parrot's call, and leap the rainbows of the brooks,
Not with blinded eyesight poring over miserable books—

Fool, again the dream, the fancy! but I *know* my words are wild,
But I count the gray barbarian lower than the Christian child.

I, to herd with narrow foreheads, vacant of our glorious gains,
Like a beast with lower pleasures, like a beast with lower pains!

Mated with a squalid savage—what to me were sun or clime?
I the heir of all the ages, in the foremost files of time—

I that rather held it better men should perish one by one,
Than that earth should stand at gaze like Joshua's moon in Ajalon!

Not in vain the distance beacons. Forward, forward let us range,
Let the great world spin for ever down the ringing grooves of change.

Thro' the shadow of the globe we sweep into the younger day:
Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of Cathay.

Mother-Age (for mine I knew not) help me as when life begun:
Rift the hills, and roll the waters, flash the lightnings, weigh the Sun.

O, I see the crescent promise of my spirit hath not set.
Ancient founts of inspiration well thro' all my fancy yet.

Howsoever these things be, a long farewell to Locksley Hall!
Now for me the woods may wither, now for me the roof-tree fall.

Comes a vapor from the margin, blackening over heath and holt,
Cramming all the blast before it, in its breast a thunderbolt.

Let it fall on Locksley Hall, with rain or hail, or fire or snow;
For the mighty wind arises, roaring seaward, and I go.

GODIVA.

I waited for the train at Coventry;
I hung with grooms and porters on the bridge,
To watch the three tall spires; and there I shaped
The city's ancient legend into this:—
Not only we, the latest seed of Time,
New men, that in the flying of a wheel
Cry down the past, not only we, that prate
Of rights and wrongs, have loved the people well,
And loathed to see them overtax'd; but she
Did more, and underwent, and overcame,
The woman of a thousand summers back,
Godiva, wife to that grim Earl, who ruled
In Coventry: for when he laid a tax
Upon his town, and all the mothers brought
Their children, clamoring, 'If we pay, we starve!'
She sought her lord, and found him, where he strode
About the hall, among his dogs, alone,
His beard a foot before him, and his hair
A yard behind. She told him of their tears,
And pray'd him, 'If they pay this tax, they starve.'
Whereat he stared, replying, half-amazed,
'You would not let your little finger ache
For such as *these?*'—'But I would die,' said she.
He laugh'd, and swore by Peter and by Paul:
Then fillip'd at the diamond in her ear;
'Oh ay, ay, ay, you talk!'—'Alas!' she said,
'But prove me what it is I would not do.'
And from a heart as rough as Esau's hand,
He answer'd, 'Ride you naked thro' the town,
And I repeal it;' and nodding, as in scorn,
He parted, with great strides among his dogs.
So left alone, the passions of her mind,
As winds from all the compass shift and blow,
Made war upon each other for an hour,
Till pity won. She sent a herald forth,
And bade him cry, with sound of trumpet, all
The hard condition; but that she would loose
The people: therefore, as they loved her well,
From then till noon no foot should pace the street,
No eye look down, she passing; but that all
Should keep within, door shut, and window barr'd.
Then fled she to her inmost bower, and there
Unclasp'd the wedded eagles of her belt,
The grim Earl's gift; but ever at a breath
She linger'd, looking like a summer moon
Half-dipt in cloud: anon she shook her head,
And shower'd the rippled ringlets to her knee;
Unclad herself in haste; adown the stair
Stole on; and, like a creeping sunbeam, slid
From pillar unto pillar, until she reach'd
The gateway; there she found her palfrey trapt
In purple blazon'd with armorial gold.
Then she rode forth, clothed on with chastity:
The deep air listen'd round her as she rode,
And all the low wind hardly breathed for fear.
The little wide-mouth'd heads upon the spout

"THE SLOW MOON CLIMBS: THE DEEP MOANS ROUND WITH MANY VOICES."—*Page 76.*

Had cunning eyes to see: the barking cur
Made her cheek flame: her palfrey's foot-fall shot
Light horrors thro' her pulses: the blind walls
Were full of chinks and holes; and overhead
Fantastic gables, crowding, stared: but she
Not less thro' all bore up, till, last, she saw
The white-flower'd elder-thicket from the field
Gleam thro' the Gothic archway in the wall.
Then she rode back, clothed on with chastity:
And one low churl, compact of thankless earth,
The fatal byword of all years to come,
Boring a little auger-hole in fear,
Peep'd—but his eyes, before they had their will,
Were shrivell'd into darkness in his head,
And dropt before him. So the Powers, who wait
On noble deeds, cancell'd a sense misused;
And she, that knew not, pass'd: and all at once,
With twelve great shocks of sound, the shameless noon
Was clash'd and hammer'd from a hundred towers,
One after one: but even then she gain'd
Her bower: whence reissuing, robed and crown'd,
To meet her lord, she took the tax away
And built herself an everlasting name.

THE DAY-DREAM.

PROLOGUE.

O Lady Flora, let me speak:
A pleasant hour has passed away
While, dreaming on your damask cheek,
The dewy sister-eyelids lay.
As by the lattice you reclined,
I went thro' many wayward moods
To see you dreaming—and, behind,
A summer crisp with shining woods.
And I too dream'd, until at last
Across my fancy, brooding warm,
The reflex of a legend past,
And loosely settled into form.
And would you have the thought I had,
And see the vision that I saw,
Then take the broidery-frame, and add
A crimson to the quaint Macaw,
And I will tell it. Turn your face,
Nor look with that too-earnest eye—
The rhymes are dazzled from their place
And order'd words asunder fly.

THE SLEEPING PALACE.

I.

The varying year with blade and sheaf
Clothes and reclothes the happy plains,
Here rests the sap within the leaf,
Here stays the blood along the veins.
Faint shadows, vapors lightly curl'd,
Faint murmurs from the meadows come,
Like hints and echoes of the world
To spirits folded in the womb.

II.

Soft lustre bathes the range of urns
On every slanting terrace-lawn.
The fountain to his place returns
Deep in the garden lake withdrawn.
Here droops the banner on the tower,
On the hall-hearths the festal fires,
The peacock in his laurel bower,
The parrot in his gilded wires.

III.

Roof-haunting martins warm their eggs:
In these, in those the life is stay'd.

The mantles from the golden pegs
Droop sleepily: no sound is made,
Not even of a gnat that sings.
More like a picture seemeth all
Than those old portraits of old kings,
That watch the sleepers from the wall.

IV.

Here sits the Butler with a flask
Between his knees, half-drain'd; and there
The wrinkled steward at his task,
The maid-of-honor blooming fair;
The page has caught her hand in his:
Her lips are sever'd as to speak:
His own are pouted to a kiss:
The blush is fix'd upon her cheek.

V.

Till all the hundred summers pass,
The beams, that thro' the Oriel shine,
Make prisms in every carven glass,
And beaker brimm'd with noble wine.
Each baron at the banquet sleeps,
Grave faces gather'd in a ring.
His state the king reposing keeps.
He must have been a jovial king.

VI.

All round a hedge upshoots, and shows
At distance like a little wood;
Thorns, ivies, woodbine, mistletoes,
And grapes with bunches red as blood;
All creeping plants, a wall of green
Close-matted, bur and brake and briar,
And glimpsing over these, just seen,
High up, the topmost palace spire.

VII.

When will the hundred summers die,
And thought and time be born again,
And newer knowledge, drawing nigh,
Bring truth that sways the soul of men?
Here all things in their place remain,
As all were order'd, ages since.
Come, Care and Pleasure, Hope and Pain,
And bring the fated fairy Prince.

THE SLEEPING BEAUTY.

I.

YEAR after year unto her feet,
She lying on her couch alone,
Across the purple coverlet,
The maiden's jet-black hair has grown,
On either side her tranced form
Forth streaming from a braid of pearl:
The slumbrous light is rich and warm,
And moves not on the rounded curl.

II.

The silk star-broider'd coverlid
Unto her limbs itself doth mould
Languidly ever; and, amid
Her full black ringlets downward roll'd,
Glows forth each softly-shadow'd arm
With bracelets of the diamond bright:
Her constant beauty doth inform
Stillness with love, and day with light.

III.

She sleeps: her breathings are not heard
In palace chambers far apart.
The fragrant tresses are not stirr'd
That lie upon her charmed heart.
She sleeps: on either hand upswells
The gold-fringed pillow lightly prest:
She sleeps, nor dreams, but ever dwells
A perfect form in perfect rest.

THE ARRIVAL.

I.

ALL precious things, discover'd late,
To those that seek them issue forth;
For love in sequel works with fate,
And draws the veil from hidden worth.
He travels far from other skies—
His mantle glitters on the rocks—
A fairy Prince, with joyful eyes,
And lighter-footed than the fox.

II.

The bodies and the bones of those
That strove in other days to pass,
Are wither'd in the thorny close,
Or scatter'd blanching on the grass.
He gazes on the silent dead:
'They perish'd in their daring deeds.'
This proverb flashes thro' his head,
'The many fail: the one succeeds.'

III.

He comes, scarce knowing what he seeks:
He breaks the hedge: he enters there:
The color flies into his cheeks:
He trusts to light on something fair;
For all his life the charm did talk
About his path, and hover near
With words of promise in his walk,
And whisper'd voices at his ear.

IV.

More close and close his footsteps wind:
The Magic Music in his heart
Beats quick and quicker, till he find
The quiet chamber far apart.
His spirit flutters like a lark,
He stoops—to kiss her—on his knee.
'Love, if thy tresses be so dark,
How dark those hidden eyes must be!'

THE REVIVAL.

I.

A TOUCH, a kiss! the charm was snapt.
There rose a noise of striking clocks,
And feet that ran, and doors that clapt,
And barking dogs, and crowing cocks;
A fuller light illumined all,
A breeze thro' all the garden swept,
A sudden hubbub shook the hall,
And sixty feet the fountain leapt.

II.

The hedge broke in, the banner blew,
The butler drank, the steward scrawl'd,
The fire shot up, the martin flew,
The parrot scream'd, the peacock squall'd,
The maid and page renew'd their strife,
The palace bang'd, and buzz'd and clackt,
And all the long-pent stream of life
Dash'd downward in a cataract.

III.

And last with these the king awoke,
And in his chair himself uprear'd,
And yawn'd, and rubb'd his face, and spoke,
'By holy rood, a royal beard!
How say you? we have slept, my lords.
My beard has grown into my lap.'
The barons swore, with many words,
'Twas but an after-dinner's nap.

IV.

'Pardy,' return'd the king, 'but still
My joints are somewhat stiff or so.
My lord, and shall we pass the bill
I mention'd half an hour ago?'
The chancellor, sedate and vain,
In courteous words return'd reply:
But dallied with his golden chain,
And, smiling, put the question by.

THE DEPARTURE.

I.

And on her lover's arm she leant,
And round her waist she felt it fold,
And far across the hills they went
In that new world which is the old:
Across the hills, and far away
Beyond their utmost purple rim,
And deep into the dying day
The happy princess follow'd him.

II.

'I'd sleep another hundred years,
O love, for such another kiss;'
'O wake for ever, love,' she hears,
'O love, 'twas such as this and this.'
And o'er them many a sliding star,
And many a merry wind was borne,
And, stream'd thro' many a golden bar,
The twilight melted into morn.

III.

'O eyes long laid in happy sleep!'
'O happy sleep, that lightly fled!'
'O happy kiss, that woke thy sleep!'
'O love, thy kiss would wake the dead!'
And o'er them many a flowing range
Of vapor buoy'd the crescent-bark,
And, rapt thro' many a rosy change,
The twilight died into the dark.

IV.

'A hundred summers! can it be?
And whither goest thou, tell me where?'
'O seek my father's court with me,
For there are greater wonders there.'
And o'er the hills, and far away
Beyond their utmost purple rim,
Beyond the night, across the day,
Thro' all the world she follow'd him.

MORAL.

I.

So, Lady Flora, take my lay,
And if you find no moral there,
Go, look in any glass and say,
What moral is in being fair.
Oh, to what uses shall we put
The wildweed-flower that simply blows?
And is there any moral shut
Within the bosom of the rose?

II.

But any man that walks the mead,
In bud or blade, or bloom, may find,
According as his humors lead,
A meaning suited to his mind.
And liberal applications lie
In Art like Nature, dearest friend;
So 'twere to cramp its use, if I
Should hook it to some useful end.

L'ENVOI.

I.

You shake your head. A random string
Your finer female sense offends.
Well—were it not a pleasant thing
To fall asleep with all one's friends;
To pass with all our social ties
To silence from the paths of men;
And every hundred years to rise
And learn the world, and sleep again;
To sleep thro' terms of mighty wars,
And wake on science grown to more,
On secrets of the brain, the stars,
As wild as aught of fairy lore;
And all that else the years will show,
The Poet-forms of stronger hours,
The vast Republics that may grow,
The Federations and the Powers;
Titanic forces taking birth
In divers seasons, divers climes;
For we are Ancients of the earth,
And in the morning of the times.

II.

So sleeping, so aroused from sleep
Thro' sunny decads new and strange,
Or gay quinquenniads would we reap
The flower and quintessence of change.

III.

Ah, yet would I—and would I might!
So much your eyes my fancy take—
Be still the first to leap to light
That I might kiss those eyes awake!
For, am I right, or am I wrong,
To choose your own you did not care;
You'd have *my* moral from the song,
And I will take my pleasure there:
And, am I right or am I wrong,
My fancy, ranging thro' and thro',
To search a meaning for the song,
Perforce will still revert to you;
Nor finds a closer truth than this
All-graceful head, so richly curl'd,
And evermore a costly kiss
The prelude to some brighter world.

IV.

For since the time when Adam first
Embraced his Eve in happy hour,
And every bird of Eden burst
In carol, every bud to flower,
What eyes, like thine, have waken'd hopes,
What lips, like thine, so sweetly join'd?
Where on the double rosebud droops
The fulness of the pensive mind;
Which all too dearly self-involved,
Yet sleeps a dreamless sleep to me;
A sleep by kisses undissolved,
That lets thee neither hear nor see:
But break it. In the name of wife,
And in the rights that name may give,
Are clasp'd the moral of thy life,
And that for which I care to live.

EPILOGUE.

So, Lady Flora, take my lay,
And, if you find a meaning there,
O whisper to your glass, and say,
'What wonder, if he thinks me fair?'
What wonder I was all unwise,
To shape the song for your delight
Like long-tail'd birds of Paradise
That float thro' Heaven, and cannot light?
Or old-world trains, upheld at court
By Cupid-boys of blooming hue—
But take it—earnest wed with sport,
And either sacred unto you.

AMPHION.

My father left a park to me,
But it is wild and barren,
A garden too with scarce a tree,
And waster than a warren:
Yet say the neighbors when they call,
It is not bad but good land,
And in it is the germ of all
That grows within the woodland.

O had I lived when song was great
In days of old Amphion,
And ta'en my fiddle to the gate,
Nor cared for seed or scion!
And had I lived when song was great,
And legs of trees were limber,
And ta'en my fiddle to the gate,
And fiddled in the timber!

'Tis said he had a tuneful tongue,
Such happy intonation,
Wherever he sat down and sung
He left a small plantation;
Wherever in a lonely grove
He set up his forlorn pipes,
The gouty oak began to move,
And flounder into hornpipes.

The mountain stirr'd its bushy crown,
And, as tradition teaches,
Young ashes pirouetted down
Coquetting with young beeches;

And briony-vine and ivy-wreath
Ran forward to his rhyming,
And from the valleys underneath
Came little copses climbing.

The linden broke her ranks and rent
The woodbine wreaths that bind her,
And down the middle, buzz! she went
With all her bees behind her:
The poplars, in long order due,
With cypress promenaded,
The shock-head willows two and two
By rivers gallopaded.

Came wet-shod alder from the wave,
Came yews, a dismal coterie;
Each pluck'd his one foot from the grave,
Poussetting with a sloe-tree:
Old elms came breaking from the vine,
The vine stream'd out to follow,
And, sweating rosin, plump'd the pine
From many a cloudy hollow.

And wasn't it a sight to see,
When, ere his song was ended,
Like some great landslip, tree by tree,
The country-side descended;
And shepherds from the mountain-eaves
Look'd down, half-pleased, half-frighten'd,
As dash'd about the drunken leaves
The random sunshine lighten'd!

Oh, nature first was fresh to men,
And wanton without measure;
So youthful and so flexile then,
You moved her at your pleasure.
Twang out, my fiddle! shake the twigs!
And make her dance attendance;
Blow, flute, and stir the stiff-set sprigs,
And scirrhous roots and tendons.

'Tis vain! in such a brassy age
I could not move a thistle;
The very sparrows in the hedge
Scarce answer to my whistle;
Or at the most, when three-parts-sick
With strumming and with scraping,
A jackass heehaws from the rick,
The passive oxen gaping.

But what is that I hear? a sound
Like sleepy counsel pleading;
O Lord!—'tis in my neighbor's ground,
The modern Muses reading.
They read Botanic Treatises,
And Works on Gardening thro' there,
And Methods of transplanting trees
To look as if they grew there.

The wither'd Misses! how they prose
O'er books of travell'd seamen,
And show you slips of all that grows
From England to Van Diemen.
They read in arbors clipt and cut,
And alleys, faded places,
By squares of tropic summer shut
And warm'd in crystal cases.

But these, tho' fed with careful dirt,
Are neither green nor sappy;
Half-conscious of the garden-squirt,
The spindlings look unhappy.
Better to me the meanest weed
That blows upon its mountain,
The vilest herb that runs to seed
Beside its native fountain.

And I must work thro' months of toil,
And years of cultivation,
Upon my proper patch of soil
To grow my own plantation.
I'll take the showers as they fall,
I will not vex my bosom:
Enough if at the end of all
A little garden blossom.

ST. AGNES' EVE.

Deep on the convent-roof the snows
Are sparkling to the moon:
My breath to heaven like vapor goes:
May my soul follow soon!
The shadows of the convent-towers
Slant down the snowy sward,
Still creeping with the creeping hours
That lead me to my Lord:

Make Thou my spirit pure and clear
As are the frosty skies,
Or this first snowdrop of the year
That in my bosom lies.

As these white robes are soil'd and dark,
To yonder shining ground;
As this pale taper's earthly spark,
To yonder argent round;
So shows my soul before the Lamb,
My spirit before Thee;
So in mine earthly house I am,
To that I hope to be.
Break up the heavens, O Lord! and far,
Thro' all yon starlight keen,
Draw me, thy bride, a glittering star,
In raiment white and clean.

He lifts me to the golden doors;
The flashes come and go;
All heaven bursts her starry floors,
And strows her lights below,
And deepens on and up! the gates
Roll back, and far within
For me the Heavenly Bridegroom waits,
To make me pure of sin.
The sabbaths of Eternity,
One sabbath deep and wide—
A light upon the shining sea—
The Bridegroom with his bride!

SIR GALAHAD.

My good blade carves the casques of men,
My tough lance thrusteth sure,
My strength is as the strength of ten,
Because my heart is pure.
The shattering trumpet shrilleth high,
The hard brands shiver on the steel,
The splinter'd spear-shafts crack and fly,
The horse and rider reel:
They reel, they roll in clanging lists,
And when the tide of combat stands,
Perfume and flowers fall in showers,
That lightly rain from ladies' hands.

How sweet are looks that ladies bend
On whom their favors fall!
For them I battle till the end,
To save from shame and thrall:
But all my heart is drawn above,
My knees are bow'd in crypt and shrine:
I never felt the kiss of love,
Nor maiden's hand in mine.
More bounteous aspects on me beam,
Me mightier transports move and thrill;
So keep I fair thro' faith and prayer
A virgin heart in work and will.

When down the stormy crescent goes,
A light before me swims,
Between dark stems the forest glows,
I hear a noise of hymns:
Then by some secret shrine I ride;
I hear a voice but none are there;
The stalls are void, the doors are wide,
The tapers burning fair.
Fair gleams the snowy altar-cloth,
The silver vessels sparkle clean,
The shrill bell rings, the censer swings,
And solemn chaunts resound between.

Sometimes on lonely mountain-meres
I find a magic bark;
I leap on board: no helmsman steers:
I float till all is dark.
A gentle sound, an awful light!
Three angels bear the holy Grail:
With folded feet, in stoles of white,
On sleeping wings they sail.
Ah, blessed vision! blood of God!
My spirit beats her mortal bars,
As down dark tides the glory slides,
And star-like mingles with the stars.

When on my goodly charger borne
Thro' dreaming towns I go,
The cock crows ere the Christmas morn,
The streets are dumb with snow.
The tempest crackles on the leads,
And, ringing, springs from brand and mail;
But o'er the dark a glory spreads,
And gilds the driving hail.
I leave the plain, I climb the height;

No branchy thicket shelter yields;
But blessed forms in whistling storms
Fly o'er waste fens and windy fields.

A maiden knight—to me is given
Such hope, I know not fear;
I yearn to breathe the airs of heaven
That often meet me here.
I muse on joy that will not cease,
Pure spaces clothed in living beams,
Pure lilies of eternal peace,
Whose odors haunt my dreams;
And, stricken by an angel's hand,
This mortal armor that I wear,
This weight and size, this heart and eyes,
Are touch'd, are turn'd to finest air.

The clouds are broken in the sky,
And thro' the mountain-walls
A rolling organ-harmony
Swells up, and shakes and falls.
Then move the trees, the copses nod,
Wings flutter, voices hover clear:
'O just and faithful knight of God!
Ride on! the prize is near.'
So pass I hostel, hall, and grange;
By bridge and ford, by park and pale,
All-arm'd I ride, whate'er betide,
Until I find the holy Grail.

EDWARD GRAY.

SWEET Emma Moreland of yonder town
Met me walking on yonder way,
'And have you lost your heart?' she said;
'And are you married yet, Edward Gray?'

Sweet Emma Moreland spoke to me:
Bitterly weeping I turn'd away:
'Sweet Emma Moreland, love no more
Can touch the heart of Edward Gray.

'Ellen Adair she loved me well,
Against her father's and mother's will:
To-day I sat for an hour and wept,
By Ellen's grave, on the windy hill.

'Shy she was, and I thought her cold;
Thought her proud, and fled over the sea;
Fill'd I was with folly and spite,
When Ellen Adair was dying for me.

'Cruel, cruel the words I said!
Cruelly came they back to-day:
"You're too slight and fickle," I said,
"To trouble the heart of Edward Gray."

'There I put my face in the grass—
Whisper'd, "Listen to my despair:
I repent me of all I did:
Speak a little, Ellen Adair!"

'Then I took a pencil, and wrote
On the mossy stone, as I lay,
"Here lies the body of Ellen Adair;
And here the heart of Edward Gray!"

'Love may come, and love may go,
And fly, like a bird, from tree to tree;
But I will love no more, no more,
Till Ellen Adair come back to me.

'Bitterly wept I over the stone:
Bitterly weeping I turn'd away:
There lies the body of Ellen Adair!
And there the heart of Edward Gray!'

WILL WATERPROOF'S LYRICAL MONOLOGUE.

MADE AT THE COCK.

O PLUMP head-waiter at The Cock,
To which I most resort,
How goes the time? 'Tis five o'clock.
Go fetch a pint of port:
But let it not be such as that
You set before chance-comers,

But such whose father-grape grew fat
On Lusitanian summers.

No vain libation to the Muse,
But may she still be kind,
And whisper lovely words, and use
Her influence on the mind,
To make me write my random rhymes,
Ere they be half-forgotten;
Nor add and alter, many times,
Till all be ripe and rotten.

I pledge her, and she comes and dips
Her laurel in the wine,
And lays it thrice upon my lips,
These favor'd lips of mine;
Until the charm have power to make
New lifeblood warm the bosom,
And barren commonplaces break
In full and kindly blossom.

I pledge her silent at the board;
Her gradual fingers steal
And touch upon the master-chord
Of all I felt and feel.
Old wishes, ghosts of broken plans
And phantom hopes assemble;
And that child's heart within the man's
Begins to move and tremble.

Thro' many an hour of summer suns,
By many pleasant ways,
Against its fountain upward runs
The current of my days:
I kiss the lips I once have kiss'd;
The gas-light wavers dimmer;
And softly, thro' a vinous mist,
My college friendships glimmer.

I grow in worth, and wit, and sense,
Unboding critic-pen,
Or that eternal want of pence,
Which vexes public men,
Who hold their hands to all, and cry
For that which all deny them—
Who sweep the crossings, wet or dry,
And all the world go by them.

Ah yet, tho' all the world forsake,
Tho' fortune clip my wings,
I will not cramp my heart, nor take
Half-views of men and things.
Let Whig and Tory stir their blood;
There must be stormy weather;
But for some true result of good
All parties work together.

Let there be thistles, there are grapes;
If old things, there are new;
Ten thousand broken lights and shapes,
Yet glimpses of the true.
Let raffs be rife in prose and rhyme,
We lack not rhymes and reasons,
As on this whirligig of Time
We circle with the seasons.

This earth is rich in man and maid;
With fair horizons bound:
This whole wide earth of light and shade
Comes out a perfect round.
High over roaring Temple-bar,
And set in Heaven's third story,
I look at all things as they are,
But thro' a kind of glory.

Head-waiter, honor'd by the guest
Half-mused, or reeling ripe,
The pint, you brought me, was the best
That ever came from pipe.
But tho' the port surpasses praise,
My nerves have dealt with stiffer.
Is there some magic in the place?
Or do my peptics differ?

For since I came to live and learn,
No pint of white or red
Had ever half the power to turn
This wheel within my head,
Which bears a season'd brain about,
Unsubject to confusion,
Tho' soak'd and saturate, out and out,
Thro' every convolution.

For I am of a numerous house,
With many kinsmen gay,
Where long and largely we carouse
As who shall say me nay:
Each month, a birth-day coming on,
We drink defying trouble,
Or sometimes two would meet in one,
And then we drank it double;

Whether the vintage, yet unkept,
Had relish fiery-new,
Or elbow-deep in sawdust, slept,
As old as Waterloo;
Or stow'd, when classic Canning died,
In musty bins and chambers,
Had cast upon its crusty side
The gloom of ten Decembers.

The Muse, the jolly Muse, it is!
She answer'd to my call,
She changes with that mood or this,
Is all-in-all to all:
She lit the spark within my throat,
To make my blood run quicker,
Used all her fiery will, and smote
Her life into the liquor.

And hence this halo lives about
The waiter's hands, that reach
To each his perfect pint of stout,
His proper chop to each.
He looks not like the common breed
That with the napkin dally;
I think he came like Ganymede,
From some delightful valley.

The Cock was of a larger egg
Than modern poultry drop,
Stept forward on a firmer leg,
And cramm'd a plumper crop;
Upon an ampler dunghill trod,
Crow'd lustier late and early,
Sipt wine from silver, praising God,
And raked in golden barley.

A private life was all his joy,
Till in a court he saw
A something-pottle-bodied boy
That knuckled at the taw:
He stoop'd and clutch'd him, fair and good,
Flew over roof and casement:
His brothers of the weather stood
Stock-still for sheer amazement.

But he, by farmstead, thorpe and spire,
And follow'd with acclaims,
A sign to many a staring shire
Came crowing over Thames.
Right down by smoky Paul's they bore,
Till, where the street grows straiter,
One fix'd for ever at the door,
And one became head-waiter.

But whither would my fancy go?
How out of place she makes
The violet of a legend blow
Among the chops and steaks!
'Tis but a steward of the can,
One shade more plump than common;
As just and mere a serving-man
As any born of woman.

I ranged too high: what draws me down
Into the common day?
Is it the weight of that half-crown,
Which I shall have to pay?
For, something duller than at first,
Nor wholly comfortable,
I sit, my empty glass reversed,
And thrumming on the table:

Half fearful that, with self at strife,
I take myself to task;
Lest of the fulness of my life
I leave an empty flask:
For I had hope, by something rare
To prove myself a poet:
But, while I plan and plan, my hair
Is gray before I know it.

So fares it since the years began,
Till they be gather'd up;
The truth, that flies the flowing can,
Will haunt the vacant cup:
And others' follies teach us not,
Nor much their wisdom teaches;
And most, of sterling worth, is what
Our own experience preaches.

Ah, let the rusty theme alone!
We know not what we know.
But for my pleasant hour, 'tis gone;
'Tis gone, and let it go.
'Tis gone: a thousand such have slipt
Away from my embraces,
And fall'n into the dusty crypt
Of darken'd forms and faces.

Go, therefore, thou! thy betters went
Long since, and came no more;
With peals of genial clamor sent
From many a tavern-door,
With twisted quirks and happy hits,
From misty men of letters;
The tavern-hours of mighty wits—
Thine elders and thy betters.

Hours, when the Poet's words and looks
Had yet their native glow:
Nor yet the fear of little books
Had made him talk for show;
But, all his vast heart sherris-warm'd,
He flash'd his random speeches,
Ere days, that deal in ana, swarm'd
His literary leeches.

So mix for ever with the past,
Like all good things on earth!
For should I prize thee, couldst thou last,
At half thy real worth?
I hold it good, good things should pass:
With time I will not quarrel:
It is but yonder empty glass
That makes me maudlin-moral.

Head-waiter of the chop-house here,
To which I most resort,
I too must part: I hold thee dear
For this good pint of port.
For this, thou shalt from all things suck
Marrow of mirth and laughter;
And wheresoe'er thou move, good luck
Shall fling her old shoe after.

But thou wilt never move from hence,
The sphere thy fate allots:
Thy latter days increased with pence
Go down among the pots:
Thou battenest by the greasy gleam
In haunts of hungry sinners,
Old boxes, larded with the steam
Of thirty thousand dinners.

We fret, we fume, would shift our skins,
Would quarrel with our lot;
Thy care is, under polish'd tins,
To serve the hot-and-hot;
To come and go, and come again,
Returning like the pewit,
And watch'd by silent gentlemen,
That trifle with the cruet.

Live long, ere from thy topmost head
The thick-set hazel dies;
Long, ere the hateful crow shall tread
The corners of thine eyes:
Live long, nor feel in head or chest
Our changeful equinoxes,
Till mellow Death, like some late guest,
Shall call thee from the boxes.

But when he calls, and thou shalt cease
To pace the gritted floor,
And, laying down an unctuous lease
Of life, shalt earn no more;
No carved cross-bones, the types of Death,
Shall show thee past to Heaven:
But carved cross-pipes, and, underneath,
A pint-pot neatly graven.

LADY CLARE.

It was the time when lilies blow,
And clouds are highest up in air,
Lord Ronald brought a lily-white doe
To give his cousin, Lady Clare.

I trow they did not part in scorn:
Lovers long-betroth'd were they:
They too will wed the morrow morn:
God's blessing on the day!

'He does not love me for my birth,
Nor for my lands so broad and fair;
He loves me for my own true worth,
And that is well,' said Lady Clare.

In there came old Alice the nurse,
Said, 'Who was this that went from thee?'
'It was my cousin,' said Lady Clare,
'To-morrow he weds with me.'

'O God be thank'd!' said Alice the nurse,
'That all comes round so just and fair:
Lord Ronald is heir of all your lands,
And you are *not* the Lady Clare.'

'Are ye out of your mind, my nurse, my nurse?'
Said Lady Clare, 'that ye speak so wild?'
'As God's above,' said Alice the nurse,
'I speak the truth: you are my child.

'The old Earl's daughter died at my breast;
I speak the truth, as I live by bread!
I buried her like my own sweet child,
And put my child in her stead.'

'Falsely, falsely have ye done,
O mother,' she said, 'if this be true,
To keep the best man under the sun
So many years from his due.'

'Nay now, my child,' said Alice the nurse,
'But keep the secret for your life,
And all you have will be Lord Ronald's,
When you are man and wife.

'If I'm a beggar born,' she said,
'I will speak out, for I dare not lie.
Pull off, pull off, the brooch of gold,
And fling the diamond necklace by.'

'Nay now, my child,' said Alice the nurse,
'But keep the secret all ye can.'
She said, 'Not so: but I will know
If there be any faith in man.'

'Nay now, what faith?' said Alice the nurse,
'The man will cleave unto his right.'
'And he shall have it,' the lady replied,
'Tho' I should die to-night.'

'Yet give one kiss to your mother dear!
Alas, my child, I sinn'd for thee.'

'O mother, mother, mother,' she said,
'So strange it seems to me.

'Yet here's a kiss for my mother dear,
My mother dear, if this be so,
And lay your hand upon my head,
And bless me, mother, ere I go.'

She clad herself in a russet gown,
She was no longer Lady Clare:
She went by dale, and she went by down,
With a single rose in her hair.

The lily-white doe Lord Ronald had brought
Leapt up from where she lay,
Dropt her head in the maiden's hand,
And follow'd her all the way.

Down stept Lord Ronald from his tower:
'O Lady Clare, you shame your worth!
Why come you drest like a village maid,
That are the flower of the earth?'

'If I come drest like a village maid,
I am but as my fortunes are:
I am a beggar born,' she said,
'And not the Lady Clare.'

'Play me no tricks,' said Lord Ronald,
'For I am yours in word and in deed.
Play me no tricks,' said Lord Ronald,
'Your riddle is hard to read.'

O and proudly stood she up!
Her heart within her did not fail:
She look'd into Lord Ronald's eyes,
And told him all her nurse's tale.

He laugh'd a laugh of merry scorn:
He turn'd and kiss'd her where she stood:
'If you are not the heiress born,
And I,' said he, 'the next in blood—

'If you are not the heiress born,
And I,' said he, 'the lawful heir,
We two will wed to-morrow morn,
And you shall still be Lady Clare.'

THE CAPTAIN.

A LEGEND OF THE NAVY.

He that only rules by terror
Doeth grievous wrong.
Deep as Hell I count his error.
Let him hear my song.
Brave the Captain was: the seamen
Made a gallant crew,
Gallant sons of English freemen,
Sailors bold and true.
But they hated his oppression,
Stern he was and rash;
So for every light transgression
Doom'd them to the lash.
Day by day more harsh and cruel
Seem'd the Captain's mood.
Secret wrath like smother'd fuel
Burnt in each man's blood.
Yet he hoped to purchase glory,
Hoped to make the name
Of his vessel great in story,
Wheresoe'er he came.
So they past by capes and islands,
Many a harbor-mouth,
Sailing under palmy highlands
Far within the South.
On a day when they were going
O'er the lone expanse,
In the north, her canvas flowing,
Rose a ship of France.
Then the Captain's color heighten'd,
Joyful came his speech:
But a cloudy gladness lighten'd
In the eyes of each.
'Chase,' he said: the ship flew forward,
And the wind did blow;
Stately, lightly, went she Norward,
Till she near'd the foe.
Then they look'd at him they hated,
Had what they desired:
Mute with folded arms they waited—
Not a gun was fired.
But they heard the foeman's thunder
Roaring out their doom;
All the air was torn in sunder,
Crashing went the boom,
Spars were splinter'd, decks were shatter'd,
Bullets fell like rain;
Over mast and deck were scatter'd
Blood and brains of men.
Spars were splinter'd; decks were broken:
Every mother's son—
Down they dropt—no word was spoken—
Each beside his gun.
On the decks as they were lying,
Were their faces grim.
In their blood, as they lay dying,
Did they smile on him.
Those, in whom he had reliance
For his noble name,
With one smile of still defiance
Sold him unto shame.
Shame and wrath his heart confounded,
Pale he turn'd and red,
Till himself was deadly wounded
Falling on the dead.
Dismal error! fearful slaughter!
Years have wander'd by,
Side by side beneath the water
Crew and Captain lie;
There the sunlit ocean tosses
O'er them mouldering,
And the lonely seabird crosses
With one waft of the wing.

THE LORD OF BURLEIGH.

In her ear he whispers gaily,
'If my heart by signs can tell,
Maiden, I have watch'd thee daily,
And I think thou lov'st me well.'
She replies, in accents fainter,
'There is none I love like thee.'
He is but a landscape-painter,
And a village maiden she.
He to lips, that fondly falter,
Presses his without reproof:
Leads her to the village altar,
And they leave her father's roof.
'I can make no marriage present:
Little can I give my wife.
Love will make our cottage pleasant,
And I love thee more than life.'
They by parks and lodges going
See the lordly castles stand:
Summer woods, about them blowing,

Made a murmur in the land.
From deep thought himself he rouses,
Says to her that loves him well,
'Let us see these handsome houses
Where the wealthy nobles dwell.'
So she goes by him attended,
Hears him lovingly converse,
Sees whatever fair and splendid
Lay betwixt his home and hers;
Parks with oak and chestnut shady,
Parks and order'd gardens great,
Ancient homes of lord and lady,
Built for pleasure and for state.
All he shows her makes him dearer:
Evermore she seems to gaze
On that cottage growing nearer,
Where they twain will spend their days.
O but she will love him truly!
He shall have a cheerful home;
She will order all things duly,
When beneath his roof they come.
Thus her heart rejoices greatly,
Till a gateway she discerns
With armorial bearings stately,
And beneath the gate she turns;
Sees a mansion more majestic
Than all those she saw before:
Many a gallant gay domestic
Bows before him at the door.
And they speak in gentle murmur,
When they answer to his call,
While he treads with footstep firmer,
Leading on from hall to hall.
And, while now she wonders blindly,
Nor the meaning can divine,
Proudly turns he round and kindly,
'All of this is mine and thine.'
Here he lives in state and bounty,
Lord of Burleigh, fair and free,
Not a lord in all the county
Is so great a lord as he.
All at once the color flushes
Her sweet face from brow to chin:
As it were with shame she blushes,
And her spirit changed within.
Then her countenance all over
Pale again as death did prove:
But he clasp'd her like a lover,
And he cheer'd her soul with love.
So she strove against her weakness,
Tho' at times her spirit sank:
Shaped her heart with woman's meekness
To all duties of her rank:
And a gentle consort made he,
And her gentle mind was such
That she grew a noble lady,
And the people loved her much.
But a trouble weigh'd upon her,
And perplex'd her, night and morn,
With the burthen of an honor
Unto which she was not born.
Faint she grew, and ever fainter,
And she murmur'd, 'Oh, that he
Were once more that landscape-painter,
Which did win my heart from me!'
So she droop'd and droop'd before him,
Fading slowly from his side:
Three fair children first she bore him,
Then before her time she died.
Weeping, weeping late and early,
Walking up and pacing down,
Deeply mourn'd the Lord of Burleigh,
Burleigh-house by Stamford-town.
And he came to look upon her,
And he look'd at her and said,
'Bring the dress and put it on her,
That she wore when she was wed.'
Then her people, softly treading,
Bore to earth her body, drest
In the dress that she was wed in,
That her spirit might have rest.

THE VOYAGE.

I.

We left behind the painted buoy
That tosses at the harbor-mouth;
And madly danced our hearts with joy,
As fast we fleeted to the South:
How fresh was every sight and sound
On open main or winding shore!
We knew the merry world was round,
And we might sail for evermore.

II.

Warm broke the breeze against the brow,
Dry sang the tackle, sang the sail:

The Lady's-head upon the prow
Caught the shrill salt, and sheer'd the gale.
The broad seas swell'd to meet the keel,
And swept behind; so quick the run,
We felt the good ship shake and reel,
We seem'd to sail into the Sun!

III.

How oft we saw the Sun retire,
And burn the threshold of the night,
Fall from his Ocean-lane of fire,
And sleep beneath his pillar'd light!
How oft the purple-skirted robe
Of twilight slowly downward drawn,
As thro' the slumber of the globe
Again we dash'd into the dawn!

IV.

New stars all night above the brim
Of waters lighten'd into view;
They climb'd as quickly, for the rim
Changed every moment as we flew.
Far ran the naked moon across
The houseless ocean's heaving field,
Or flying shone, the silver boss
Of her own halo's dusky shield;

V.

The peaky islet shifted shapes,
High towns on hills were dimly seen,
We past long lines of Northern capes
And dewy Northern meadows green.
We came to warmer waves, and deep
Across the boundless east we drove,
Where those long swells of breaker sweep
The nutmeg rocks and isles of clove.

VI.

By peaks that flamed, or, all in shade,
Gloom'd the low coast and quivering brine
With ashy rains, that spreading made
Fantastic plume or sable pine;
By sands and steaming flats, and floods
Of mighty mouth, we scudded fast,
And hills and scarlet-mingled woods
Glow'd for a moment as we past.

VII.

O hundred shores of happy climes,
How swiftly stream'd ye by the bark!
At times the whole sea burn'd, at times
With wakes of fire we tore the dark;
At times a carven craft would shoot
From havens hid in fairy bowers,
With naked limbs and flowers and fruit,
But we nor paused for fruit nor flowers.

VIII.

For one fair Vision ever fled
Down the waste waters day and night,
And still we follow'd where she led,
In hope to gain upon her flight.
Her face was evermore unseen,
And fixt upon the far sea-line;
But each man murmur'd, 'O my Queen,
I follow till I make thee mine.'

IX.

And now we lost her, now she gleam'd
Like Fancy made of golden air,
Now nearer to the prow she seem'd
Like Virtue firm, like Knowledge fair,
Now high on waves that idly burst
Like Heavenly Hope she crown'd the sea,
And now, the bloodless point reversed,
She bore the blade of Liberty.

X.

And only one among us—him
We pleased not—he was seldom pleased:

He saw not far: his eyes were dim:
But ours he swore were all diseased.
'A ship of fools,' he shriek'd in spite,
'A ship of fools,' he sneer'd and wept.
And overboard one stormy night
He cast his body, and on we swept.

XI.

And never sail of ours was furl'd,
Nor anchor dropt at eve or morn;
We lov'd the glories of the world,
But laws of nature were our scorn.
For blasts would rise and rave and cease,
But whence were those that drove the sail
Across the whirlwind's heart of peace,
And to and thro' the counter gale?

XII.

Again to colder climes we came,
For still we follow'd where she led:
Now mate is blind and captain lame,
And half the crew are sick or dead,
But, blind or lame or sick or sound,
We follow that which flies before:
We know the merry world is round,
And we may sail forevermore.

SIR LAUNCELOT AND QUEEN GUINEVERE.

A FRAGMENT.

LIKE souls that balance joy and pain
With tears and smiles from heaven again
The maiden Spring upon the plain
Came in a sun-lit fall of rain.

In crystal vapor everywhere
Blue isles of heaven laugh'd between,
And far, in forest-deeps unseen,
The topmost elm-tree gather'd green
From draughts of balmy air.

Sometimes the linnet piped his song:
Sometimes the throstle whistled strong:
Sometimes the sparhawk, wheel'd along,
Hush'd all the groves from fear of wrong:
By grassy capes with fuller sound
In curves the yellowing river ran,
And drooping chestnut-buds began
To spread into the perfect fan,
Above the teeming ground.

Then, in the boyhood of the year,
Sir Launcelot and Queen Guinevere
Rode thro' the coverts of the deer,
With blissful treble ringing clear.
She seem'd a part of joyous Spring:
A gown of grass-green silk she wore,
Buckled with golden clasps before;
A light-green tuft of plumes she bore
Closed in a golden ring.

Now on some twisted ivy-net,
Now by some tinkling rivulet,
In mosses mixt with violet
Her cream-white mule his pastern set:
And fleeter now she skimm'd the plains
Than she whose elfin prancer springs
By night to eery warblings,
When all the glimmering moorland rings
With jingling bridle-reins.

As fast she fled thro' sun and shade,
The happy winds upon her play'd,
Blowing the ringlet from the braid:
She look'd so lovely, as she sway'd
The rein with dainty finger-tips,
A man had given all other bliss,
And all his worldly worth for this,
To waste his whole heart in one kiss
Upon her perfect lips.

A FAREWELL.

FLOW down, cold rivulet, to the sea,
Thy tribute wave deliver:
No more by thee my steps shall be,
For ever and for ever.

"THOU ART MATED WITH A CLOWN." *Page 79.*

Flow, softly flow, by lawn and lea,
A rivulet then a river:
No where by thee my steps shall be,
For ever and for ever.

But here will sigh thine alder tree,
And here thine aspen shiver;
And here by thee will hum the bee,
For ever and for ever.

A thousand suns will stream on thee,
A thousand moons will quiver;
But not by thee my steps shall be,
For ever and for ever.

THE BEGGAR MAID.

Her arms across her breast she laid;
She was more fair than words can say:
Bare-footed came the beggar maid
Before the king Cophetua.
In robe and crown the king stept down,
To meet and greet her on her way;
'It is no wonder,' said the lords,
'She is more beautiful than day.'

As shines the moon in clouded skies,
She in her poor attire was seen:
One praised her ancles, one her eyes,
One her dark hair and lovesome mien.
So sweet a face, such angel grace,
In all that land had never been:
Cophetua sware a royal oath:
'This beggar maid shall be my queen!'

THE EAGLE.

FRAGMENT.

He clasps the crag with crooked hands;
Close to the sun in lonely lands,
Ring'd with the azure world, he stands.
The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls;
He watches from his mountain walls,
And like a thunderbolt he falls.

Move eastward, happy earth, and leave
Yon orange sunset waning slow:
From fringes of the faded eve,
O, happy planet, eastward go;
Till over thy dark shoulder glow
Thy silver sister-world, and rise
To glass herself in dewy eyes
That watch me from the glen below.

Ah, bear me with thee, smoothly borne,
Dip forward under starry light,
And move me to my marriage-morn,
And round again to happy night.

Come not, when I am dead,
To drop thy foolish tears upon my grave,
To trample round my fallen head,
And vex the unhappy dust thou wouldst not save.
There let the wind sweep and the plover cry;
But thou, go by.

Child, if it were thine error or thy crime
I care no longer, being all unblest:
Wed whom thou wilt, but I am sick of Time,
And I desire to rest.
Pass on, weak heart, and leave me where I lie:
Go by, go by.

THE LETTERS.

I.

Still on the tower stood the vane,
A black yew gloom'd the stagnant air,
I peer'd athwart the chancel pane
And saw the altar cold and bare.
A clog of lead was round my feet,
A band of pain across my brow;

'Cold altar, Heaven and earth shall meet
Before you hear my marriage vow.'

II.

I turn'd and humm'd a bitter song
That mock'd the wholesome human heart,
And then we met in wrath and wrong,
We met, but only meant to part.
Full cold my greeting was and dry;
She faintly smiled, she hardly moved;
I saw with half-unconscious eye
She wore the colors I approved.

III.

She took the little ivory chest,
With half a sigh she turn'd the key,
Then raised her head with lips comprest,
And gave my letters back to me.
And gave the trinkets and the rings,
My gifts, when gifts of mine could please;
As looks a father on the things
Of his dead son, I look'd on these.

IV.

She told me all her friends had said;
I raged against the public liar;
She talk'd as if her love were dead,
But in my words were seeds of fire.
'No more of love; your sex is known:
I never will be twice deceived.
Henceforth I trust the man alone,
The woman cannot be believed.

V.

'Thro' slander, meanest spawn of Hell—
And women's slander is the worst,
And you, whom once I lov'd so well,
Thro' you, my life will be accurst.'
I spoke with heart, and heat and force,
I shook her breast with vague alarms—
Like torrents from a mountain source
We rush'd into each other's arms.

VI.

We parted: sweetly gleam'd the stars,
And sweet the vapor-braided blue,
Low breezes fann'd the belfry bars,
As homeward by the church I drew.
The very graves appear'd to smile,
So fresh they rose in shadow'd swells;
'Dark porch,' I said, 'and silent aisle,
There comes a sound of marriage bells.'

THE VISION OF SIN.

I.

I HAD a vision when the night was late:
A youth came riding toward a palace-gate.
He rode a horse with wings, that would have flown,
But that his heavy rider kept him down.
And from the palace came a child of sin,
And took him by the curls, and led him in,
Where sat a company with heated eyes,
Expecting when a fountain should arise:
A sleepy light upon their brows and lips—
As when the sun, a crescent of eclipse,
Dreams over lake and lawn, and isles and capes—
Suffused them, sitting, lying, languid shapes,
By heaps of gourds, and skins of wine, and piles of grapes.

II.

Then methought I heard a mellow sound,
Gathering up from all the lower ground;
Narrowing in to where they sat assembled
Low voluptuous music winding trembled,

Wov'n in circles: they that heard it sigh'd,
Panted hand-in-hand with faces pale,
Swung themselves, and in low tones replied;
Till the fountain spouted, showering wide
Sleet of diamond-drift and pearly hail;
Then the music touch'd the gates and died;
Rose again from where it seem'd to fail,
Storm'd in orbs of song, a growing gale;
Till thronging in and in, to where they waited,
As 'twere a hundred-throated nightingale,
The strong tempestuous treble throbb'd and palpitated;
Ran into its giddiest whirl of sound,
Caught the sparkles, and in circles,
Purple gauzes, golden hazes, liquid mazes,
Flung the torrent rainbow round:
Then they started from their places,
Moved with violence, changed in hue,
Caught each other with wild grimaces,
Half-invisible to the view,
Wheeling with precipitate paces
To the melody, till they flew,
Hair, and eyes, and limbs, and faces,
Twisted hard in fierce embraces,
Like to Furies, like to Graces,
Dash'd together in blinding dew:
Till, kill'd with some luxurious agony,
The nerve-dissolving melody
Flutter'd headlong from the sky.

III.

And then I look'd up toward a mountain-tract,
That girt the region with high cliff and lawn:
I saw that every morning, far withdrawn
Beyond the darkness and the cataract,
God made Himself an awful rose of dawn,
Unheeded: and detaching, fold by fold,
From those still heights, and, slowly drawing near,
A vapor heavy, hueless, formless, cold,
Came floating on for many a month and year,
Unheeded: and I thought I would have spoken,
And warn'd that madman ere it grew too late:
But, as in dreams, I could not. Mine was broken,
When that cold vapor touch'd the palace gate,
And link'd again. I saw within my head
A gray and gap-tooth'd man as lean as death,
Who slowly rode across a wither'd heath,
And lighted at a ruin'd inn, and said:

IV.

'Wrinkled ostler, grim and thin!
Here is custom come your way;
Take my brute, and lead him in,
Stuff his ribs with mouldy hay.

'Bitter barmaid, waning fast!
See that sheets are on my bed;
What! the flower of life is past:
It is long before you wed.

'Slip-shod waiter, lank and sour,
At the Dragon on the heath!
Let us have a quiet hour,
Let us hob-and-nob with Death.

'I am old, but let me drink;
Bring me spices, bring me wine;
I remember, when I think,
That my youth was half divine.

Wine is good for shrivell'd lips,
When a blanket wraps the day,
When the rotten woopland drips,
And the leaf is stamp'd in clay.

'Sit thee down, and have no shame,
Cheek by jowl, and knee by knee:
What care I for any name?
What for order or degree?

'Let me screw thee up a peg:
Let me loose thy tongue with wine:

Callest thou that thing a leg?
Which is thinnest? thine or mine?

'Thou shalt not be saved by works:
Thou hast been a sinner too:
Ruin'd trunks on wither'd forks,
Empty scarecrows, I and you!

'Fill the cup, and fill the can:
Have a rouse before the morn:
Every moment dies a man,
Every moment one is born.

'We are men of ruin'd blood;
Therefore comes it we are wise.
Fish are we that love the mud,
Rising to no fancy-flies.

'Name and fame! to fly sublime
Thro' the courts, the camps, the schools,
Is to be the ball of Time,
Bandied by the hands of fools.

'Friendship!—to be two in one—
Let the canting liar pack!
Well I know, when I am gone,
How she mouths behind my back.

'Virtue!—to be good and just—
Every heart, when sifted well,
Is a clot of warmer dust,
Mix'd with cunning sparks of hell.

'O! we two as well can look
Whited thought and cleanly life
As the priest, above his book
Leering at his neighbor's wife.

'Fill the cup, and fill the can:
Have a rouse before the morn:
Every moment dies a man,
Every moment one is born.

'Drink, and let the parties rave:
They are fill'd with idle spleen;
Rising, falling, like a wave,
For they know not what they mean.

'He that roars for liberty
Faster binds a tyrant's power;
And the tyrant's cruel glee
Forces on the freer hour.

'Fill the can, and fill the cup:
All the windy ways of men
Are but dust that rises up,
And is lightly laid again.

'Greet her with applausive breath,
Freedom, gaily doth she tread;
In her right a civic wreath,
In her left a human head.

'No, I love not what is new;
She is of an ancient house:
And I think we know the hue
Of that cap upon her brows.

'Let her go! her thirst she slakes
Where the bloody conduit runs,
Then her sweetest meal she makes
On the first-born of her sons.

'Drink to lofty hopes that cool—
Visions of a perfect State:
Drink we, last, the public fool,
Frantic love and frantic hate.

'Chant me now some wicked stave,
Till thy drooping courage rise,
And the glow-worm of the grave
Glimmer in thy rheumy eyes.

'Fear not thou to loose thy tongue;
Set thy hoary fancies free;
What is loathsome to the young
Savors well to thee and me.

'Change, reverting to the years,
When thy nerves could understand
What there is in loving tears,
And the warmth of hand in hand.

'Tell me tales of thy first love—
April hopes, the fools of chance;
Till the graves begin to move,
And the dead begin to dance.

'Fill the can, and fill the cup:
All the windy ways of men
Are but dust that rises up,
And is lightly laid again.

'Trooping from their mouldy dens
The chap-fallen circle spreads:

Welcome, fellow-citizens,
Hollow hearts and empty heads!

'You are bones, and what of that?
Every face, however full,
Padded round with flesh and fat,
Is but modell'd on a skull.

'Death is king, and Vivat Rex!
Tread a measure on the stones,
Madam—if I know your sex,
From the fashion of your bones.

'No, I cannot praise the fire
In your eye—nor yet your lip:
All the more do I admire
Joints of cunning workmanship.

'Lo! God's likeness—the ground-plan—
Neither modell'd, glazed, nor framed:
Buss me, thou rough sketch of man,
Far too naked to be shamed!

'Drink to Fortune, drink to Chance,
While we keep a little breath!
Drink to heavy Ignorance!
Hob-and-nob with brother Death!

'Thou art mazed, the night is long,
And the longer night is near:
What! I am not all as wrong
As a bitter jest is dear.

'Youthful hopes, by scores, to all,
When the locks are crisp and curl'd;
Unto me my maudlin gall
And my mockeries of the world.

'Fill the cup, and fill the can:
Mingle madness, mingle scorn!
Dregs of life, and lees of man:
Yet we will not die forlorn.'

v.

The voice grew faint: there came a further change:
Once more uprose the mystic mountain-range:
Below were men and horses pierced with worms,
And slowly quickening into lower forms;
By shards and scurf of salt, and scum of dross,
Old plash of rains, and refuse patch'd with moss.
Then some one spake: 'Behold! it was a crime
Of sense avenged by sense that wore with time.'
Another said: 'The crime of sense became
The crime of malice, and is equal blame.'
And one: 'He had not wholly quench'd his power;
A little grain of conscience made him sour.'
At last I heard a voice upon the slope
Cry to the summit, 'Is there any hope?'
To which an answer peal'd from that high land,
But in a tongue no man could understand;
And on the glimmering limit far withdrawn
God made Himself an awful rose of dawn.

TO ——,

AFTER READING A LIFE AND LETTERS.

'Cursed be he that moves my bones.'
Shakespeare's Epitaph.

You might have won the Poet's name,
If such be worth the winning now,
And gain'd a laurel for your brow
Of sounder leaf than I can claim;

But you have made the wiser choice,
A life that moves to gracious ends
Thro' troops of unrecording friends,
A deedful life, a silent voice:

And you have miss'd the irreverent doom

Of those that wear the Poet's crown:
Hereafter, neither knave nor clown
Shall hold their orgies at your tomb.

For now the Poet cannot die,
Nor leave his music as of old,
But round him ere he scarce be cold
Begins the scandal and the cry:

'Proclaim the faults he would not show:
Break lock and seal: betray the trust:
Keep nothing sacred: 'tis but just
The many-headed beast should know.'

Ah shameless! for he did but sing
A song that pleased us from its worth;
No public life was his on earth,
No blazon'd statesman he, nor king.

He gave the people of his best:
His worst he kept, his best he gave.
My Shakespeare's curse on clown and knave
Who will not let his ashes rest!

Who make it seem more sweet to be
The little life of bank and brier,
The bird that pipes his lone desire
And dies unheard within his tree,

Than he that warbles long and loud
And drops at Glory's temple-gates,
For whom the carrion vulture waits
To tear his heart before the crowd!

TO E. L., ON HIS TRAVELS IN GREECE.

Illyrian woodlands, echoing falls
Of water, sheets of summer glass,
The long divine Peneïan pass,
The vast Akrokeraunian walls,

Tomohrit, Athos, all things fair,
With such a pencil, such a pen,
You shadow forth to distant men,
I read and felt that I was there:

And trust me while I turn'd the page,
And track'd you still on classic ground,
I grew in gladness till I found
My spirits in the golden age.

For me the torrent ever pour'd
And glisten'd—here and there alone
The broad-limb'd Gods at random thrown
By fountain-urns;—and Naiads oar'd

A glimmering shoulder under gloom
Of cavern pillars; on the swell
The silver lily heaved and fell;
And many a slope was rich in bloom

From him that on the mountain lea
By dancing rivulets fed his flocks
To him who sat upon the rocks,
And fluted to the morning sea.

Break, break, break,
On thy cold gray stones, O Sea!
And I would that my tongue could utter
The thoughts that arise in me.

O well for the fisherman's boy,
That he shouts with his sister at play!
O well for the sailor lad,
That he sings in his boat on the bay!

And the stately ships go on
To their haven under the hill;
But O for the touch of a vanish'd hand,
And the sound of a voice that is still!

Break, break, break,
At the foot of thy crags, O Sea!
But the tender grace of a day that is dead
Will never come back to me.

THE POET'S SONG.

The rain had fallen, the Poet arose,
He pass'd by the town and out of the street,

A light wind blew from the gates of the sun,
And waves of shadow went over the wheat,
And he sat him down in a lonely place,
And chanted a melody loud and sweet,
That made the wild-swan pause in her cloud,
And the lark drop down at his feet.

The swallow stopt as he hunted the fly,
The snake slipt under a spray,
The wild hawk stood with the down on his beak,
And stared, with his foot on the prey,
And the nightingale thought, 'I have sung many songs,
But never a one so gay,
For he sings of what the world will be
When the years have died away.'

ENOCH ARDEN

AND OTHER POEMS.

ENOCH ARDEN.

Long lines of cliff breaking have left a chasm;
And in the chasm are foam and yellow sands;
Beyond, red roofs about a narrow wharf
In cluster; then a moulder'd church; and higher
A long street climbs to one tall-tower'd mill;
And high in heaven behind it a gray down
With Danish barrows; and a hazel-wood,
By autumn nutters haunted, flourishes
Green in a cuplike hollow of the down.

Here on this beach a hundred years ago,
Three children of three houses, Annie Lee,
The prettiest little damsel in the port,
And Philip Ray the miller's only son,
And Enoch Arden, a rough sailor's lad
Made orphan by a winter shipwreck, play'd
Among the waste and lumber of the shore,
Hard coils of cordage, swarthy fishing-nets,
Anchors of rusty fluke, and boats updrawn;
And built their castles of dissolving sand
To watch them overflow'd, or following up
And flying the white breaker, daily left
The little footprint daily wash'd away.

A narrow cave ran in beneath the cliff:
In this the children play'd at keeping house.
Enoch was host one day, Philip the next,
While Annie still was mistress; but at times
Enoch would hold possession for a week:
'This is my house and this my little wife.'
'Mine too' said Philip 'turn and turn about:'
When, if they quarrell'd, Enoch stronger-made
Was master: then would Philip, his blue eyes
All flooded with the helpless wrath of tears,
Shriek out 'I hate you, Enoch,' and at this
The little wife would weep for company,

And pray them not to quarrel for her sake,
And say she would be little wife to both.

But when the dawn of rosy childhood past,
And the new warmth of life's ascending sun
Was felt by either, either fixt his heart
On that one girl; and Enoch spoke his love,
But Philip loved in silence; and the girl
Seem'd kinder unto Philip than to him;
But she loved Enoch; tho' she knew it not,
And would if ask'd deny it. Enoch set
A purpose evermore before his eyes,
To hoard all savings to the uttermost,
To purchase his own boat, and make a home
For Annie: and so prosper'd that at last
A luckier or a bolder fisherman,
A carefuller in peril, did not breathe
For leagues along that breaker-beaten coast
Than Enoch. Likewise had he served a year
On board a merchantman, and made himself
Full sailor; and he thrice had pluck'd a life
From the dread sweep of the down-streaming seas:
And all men look'd upon him favorably:
And ere he touch'd his one-and-twentieth May
He purchased his own boat, and made a home
For Annie, neat and nestlike, halfway up
The narrow street that clamber'd toward the mill.

Then, on a golden autumn eventide,
The younger people making holiday,
With bag and sack and basket, great and small,
Went nutting to the hazels. Philip stay'd
(His father lying sick and needing him)
An hour behind; but as he climb'd the hill,
Just where the prone edge of the wood began
To feather toward the hollow, saw the pair,
Enoch and Annie, sitting hand-in-hand,
His large gray eyes and weather-beaten face
All-kindled by a still and sacred fire,
That burn'd as on an altar. Philip look'd,
And in their eyes and faces read his doom;
Then, as their faces drew together, groan'd,
And slipt aside, and like a wounded life
Crept down into the hollows of the wood;
There, while the rest were loud in merry-making,
Had his dark hour unseen, and rose and past
Bearing a lifelong hunger in his heart.

So these were wed, and merrily rang the bells,
And merrily ran the years, seven happy years,
Seven happy years of health and competence,
And mutual love and honorable toil;
With children; first a daughter. In him woke,
With his first babe's first cry, the noble wish
To save all earnings to the uttermost,
And give his child a better bringing-up
Than his had been, or hers; a wish renew'd,
When two years after came a boy to be
The rosy idol of her solitudes,

While Enoch was abroad on wrathful seas,
Or often journeying landward; for in truth
Enoch's white horse, and Enoch's ocean-spoil
In ocean-smelling osier, and his face,
Rough-redden'd with a thousand winter gales,
Not only to the market-cross were known,
But in the leafy lanes behind the down,
Far as the portal-warding lion-whelp,
And peacock-yewtree of the lonely Hall,
Whose Friday fare was Enoch's ministering.

Then came a change, as all things human change.
Ten miles to northward of the narrow port
Open'd a larger haven: thither used
Enoch at times to go by land or sea;
And once when there, and clambering on a mast
In harbor, by mischance he slipt and fell:
A limb was broken when they lifted him;
And while he lay recovering there, his wife
Bore him another son, a sickly one:
Another hand crept too across his trade
Taking her bread and theirs: and on him fell,
Altho' a grave and staid God-fearing man,
Yet lying thus inactive, doubt and gloom.
He seem'd, as in a nightmare of the night,
To see his children leading evermore
Low miserable lives of hand-to-mouth,
And her, he loved, a beggar: then he pray'd
'Save them from this, whatever comes to me.'
And while he pray'd, the master of that ship
Enoch had served in, hearing his mischance,
Came, for he knew the man and valued him,
Reporting of his vessel China-bound,
And wanting yet a boatswain. Would he go?
There yet were many weeks before she sail'd,
Sail'd from this port. Would Enoch have the place?
And Enoch all at once assented to it,
Rejoicing at that answer to his prayer.

So now that shadow of mischance appear'd
No graver than as when some little cloud
Cuts off the fiery highway of the sun,
And isles a light in the offing: yet the wife—
When he was gone—the children—what to do?
Then Enoch lay long-pondering on his plans;
To sell the boat—and yet he loved her well—
How many a rough sea had he weather'd in her!
He knew her, as a horseman knows his horse—
And yet to sell her—then with what she brought
Buy goods and stores—set Annie forth in trade
With all that seamen needed or their wives—
So might she keep the house while he was gone.
Should he not trade himself out yonder? go
This voyage more than once? yea twice or thrice—
As oft as needed—last, returning rich,
Become the master of a larger craft,
With fuller profits lead an easier life,
Have all his pretty young ones educated,
And pass his days in peace among his own.

Thus Enoch in his heart determined all:
Then moving homeward came on Annie pale,

Nursing the sickly babe, her latest-born.
Forward she started with a happy cry,
And laid the feeble infant in his arms;
Whom Enoch took, and handled all his limbs,
Appraised his weight and fondled father-like,
But had no heart to break his purposes
To Annie, till the morrow, when he spoke.

Then first since Enoch's golden ring had girt
Her finger, Annie fought against his will:
Yet not with brawling opposition she,
But manifold entreaties, many a tear,
Many a sad kiss by day by night renew'd
(Sure that all evil would come out of it)
Besought him, supplicating, if he cared
For her or his dear children, not to go.
He not for his own self caring but her,
Her and her children, let her plead in vain;
So grieving held his will, and bore it thro'.

For Enoch parted with his old sea-friend,
Bought Annie goods and stores, and set his hand
To fit their little streetward sitting-room
With shelf and corner for the goods and stores.
So all day long till Enoch's last at home,
Shaking their pretty cabin, hammer and axe,
Auger and saw, while Annie seem'd to hear
Her own death-scaffold raising, shrill'd and rang,
Till this was ended, and his careful hand,—
The space was narrow,—having order'd all
Almost as neat and close as Nature packs
Her blossom or her seedling, paused; and he,
Who needs would work for Annie to the last,
Ascending tired, heavily slept till morn.

And Enoch faced this morning of farewell
Brightly and boldly. All his Annie's fears,
Save, as his Annie's, were a laughter to him.
Yet Enoch as a brave God-fearing man
Bow'd himself down, and in that mystery
Where God-in-man is one with man-in-God,
Pray'd for a blessing on his wife and babes
Whatever came to him: and then he said
'Annie, this voyage by the grace of God
Will bring fair weather yet to all of us.
Keep a clean hearth and a clear fire for me,
For I'll be back, my girl, before you know it.'
Then lightly rocking baby's cradle 'and he,
This pretty, puny, weakly little one,—
Nay—for I love him all the better for it—
God bless him, he shall sit upon my knees
And I will tell him tales of foreign parts,
And make him merry, when I come home again.
Come, Annie, come, cheer up before I go.'

Him running on thus hopefully she heard,
And almost hoped herself; but when he turn'd
The current of his talk to graver things
In sailor fashion roughly sermonizing
On providence and trust in Heaven, she heard,

Heard and not heard him; as the village girl,
Who sets her pitcher underneath the spring,
Musing on him that used to fill it for her,
Hears and not hears, and lets it overflow.

At length she spoke 'O Enoch, you are wise;
And yet for all your wisdom well know I
That I shall look upon your face no more.'

'Well then,' said Enoch, 'I shall look on yours.
Annie, the ship I sail in passes here
(He named the day) get you a seaman's glass,
Spy out my face, and laugh at all your fears.'

But when the last of those last moments came,
'Annie, my girl, cheer up, be comforted,
Look to the babes, and till I come again
Keep everything shipshape, for I must go.
And fear no more for me; or if you fear
Cast all your cares on God; that anchor holds.
Is He not yonder in those uttermost
Parts of the morning? if I flee to these
Can I go from Him? and the sea is His,
The sea is His: He made it.'

Enoch rose,
Cast his strong arms about his drooping wife,
And kiss'd his wonder-stricken little ones;
But for the third, the sickly one, who slept
After a night of feverous wakefulness,
When Annie would have raised him Enoch said
'Wake him not; let him sleep; how should the child
Remember this?' and kiss'd him in his cot.
But Annie from her baby's forehead clipt
A tiny curl, and gave it: this he kept
Thro' all his future; but now hastily caught
His bundle, waved his hand, and went his way.

She when the day, that Enoch mention'd, came,
Borrow'd a glass, but all in vain: perhaps
She could not fix the glass to suit her eye;
Perhaps her eye was dim, hand tremulous;
She saw him not: and while he stood on deck
Waving, the moment and the vessel past.

Ev'n to the last dip of the vanishing sail
She watch'd it, and departed weeping for him;
Then, tho' she mourn'd his absence as his grave,
Set her sad will no less to chime with his,
But throve not in her trade, not being bred
To barter, nor compensating the want
By shrewdness, neither capable of lies,
Nor asking overmuch and taking less,
And still foreboding 'what would Enoch say?'
For more than once, in days of difficulty
And pressure, had she sold her wares for less
Than what she gave in buying what she sold:
She fail'd and sadden'd knowing it; and thus,
Expectant of that news which never came,

Gain'd for her own a scanty sustenance,
And lived a life of silent melancholy.

Now the third child was sickly-born and grew
Yet sicklier, tho' the mother cared for it
With all a mother's care: nevertheless,
Whether her business often call'd her from it,
Or thro' the want of what it needed most,
Or means to pay the voice who best could tell
What most it needed—howsoe'er it was,
After a lingering,—ere she was aware,—
Like the caged bird escaping suddenly,
The little innocent soul flitted away.

In that same week when Annie buried it,
Philip's true heart, which hunger'd for her peace
(Since Enoch left he had not look'd upon her),
Smote him, as having kept aloof so long.
'Surely,' said Philip, 'I may see her now,
May be some little comfort;' therefore went,
Past thro' the solitary room in front,
Paused for a moment at an inner door,
Then struck it thrice, and, no one opening,
Enter'd; but Annie, seated with her grief,
Fresh from the burial of her little one,
Cared not to look on any human face,
But turn'd her own toward the wall and wept.
Then Philip standing up said falteringly
'Annie, I came to ask a favor of you.'

He spoke; the passion in her moan'd reply
'Favor from one so sad and so forlorn
As I am!' half abash'd him; yet unask'd,
His bashfulness and tenderness at war,
He set himself beside her, saying to her:

'I came to speak to you of what he wish'd,
Enoch, your husband: I have ever said
You chose the best among us—a strong man:
For where he fixt his heart he set his hand
To do the thing he will'd, and bore it thro'.
And wherefore did he go this weary way,
And leave you lonely? not to see the world—
For pleasure?—nay, but for the wherewithal
To give his babes a better bringing-up
Than his had been, or yours: that was his wish.
And if he come again, vext will he be
To find the precious morning hours were lost.
And it would vex him even in his grave,
If he could know his babes were running wild
Like colts about the waste. So, Annie, now—
Have we not known each other all our lives?
I do beseech you by the love you bear
Him and his children not to say me nay—
For, if you will, when Enoch comes again
Why then he shall repay me—if you will,
Annie—for I am rich and well-to-do.
Now let me put the boy and girl to school:
This is the favor that I came to ask.'

Then Annie with her brows against the wall

Answer'd 'I cannot look you in the face;
I seem so foolish and so broken down.
When you came in my sorrow broke me down;
And now I think your kindness breaks me down;
But Enoch lives; that is borne in on me:
He will repay you: money can be repaid;
Not kindness such as yours.'

And Philip ask'd
'Then you will let me, Annie?'

There she turn'd,
She rose, and fixt her swimming eyes upon him,
And dwelt a moment on his kindly face,
Then calling down a blessing on his head
Caught at his hand, and wrung it passionately,
And past into the little garth beyond.
So lifted up in spirit he moved away.

Then Philip put the boy and girl to school,
And bought them needful books, and everyway,
Like one who does his duty by his own,
Made himself theirs; and tho' for Annie's sake,
Fearing the lazy gossip of the port,
He oft denied his heart his dearest wish,
And seldom crost her threshold, yet he sent
Gifts by the children, garden-herbs and fruit,
The late and early roses from his wall,
Or conies from the down, and now and then,
With some pretext of fineness in the meal
To save the offence of charitable, flour
From his tall mill that whistled on the waste.

But Philip did not fathom Annie's mind:
Scarce could the woman when he came upon her,
Out of full heart and boundless gratitude
Light on a broken word to thank him with.
But Philip was her children's all-in-all;
From distant corners of the street they ran
To greet his hearty welcome heartily;
Lords of his house and of his mill were they;
Worried his passive ear with petty wrongs
Or pleasures, hung upon him, play'd with him
And call'd him Father Philip. Philip gain'd
As Enoch lost; for Enoch seem'd to them
Uncertain as a vision or a dream,
Faint as a figure seen in early dawn
Down at the far end of an avenue,
Going we know not where: and so ten years,
Since Enoch left his hearth and native land,
Fled forward and no news of Enoch came.

It chanced one evening Annie's children long'd
To go with others, nutting to the wood,
And Annie would go with them; then they begg'd
For Father Philip (as they call'd him) too:
Him, like the working bee in blossom-dust,
Blanch'd with his mill, they found; and saying to him
'Come with us Father Philip' he denied;
But when the children pluck'd at him to go,

He laugh'd, and yielded readily to their wish,
For was not Annie with them? and they went.

But after scaling half the weary down,
Just where the prone edge of the wood began
To feather toward the hollow, all her force
Fail'd her; and sighing, 'Let me rest' she said:
So Philip rested with her well-content;
While all the younger ones with jubilant cries
Broke from their elders, and tumultuously
Down thro' the whitening hazels made a plunge
To the bottom, and dispersed, and bent or broke
The lithe reluctant boughs to tear away
Their tawny clusters, crying to each other
And calling, here and there, about the wood.

But Philip sitting at her side forgot
Her presence, and remember'd one dark hour
Here in this wood, when like a wounded life
He crept into the shadow: at last he said,
Lifting his honest forehead, 'Listen, Annie,
How merry they are down yonder in the wood.
Tired, Annie?' for she did not speak a word.
'Tired?' but her face had fall'n upon her hands;
At which, as with a kind of anger in him,
'The ship was lost,' he said, 'the ship was lost!
No more of that! why should you kill yourself
And make them orphans quite?' And Annie said
'I thought not of it: but—I know not why—
Their voices make me feel so solitary.'

Then Philip coming somewhat closer spoke.
'Annie, there is a thing upon my mind,
And it has been upon my mind so long,
That tho' I know not when it first came there,
I know that it will out at last. O Annie,
It is beyond all hope, against all chance,
That he who left you ten long years ago
Should still be living; well then—let me speak:
I grieve to see you poor and wanting help:
I cannot help you as I wish to do
Unless—they say that women are so quick—
Perhaps you know what I would have you know—
I wish you for my wife. I fain would prove
A father to your children: I do think
They love me as a father: I am sure
That I love them as if they were mine own;
And I believe, if you were fast my wife,
That after all these sad uncertain years,
We might be still as happy as God grants
To any of his creatures. Think upon it:
For I am well-to-do—no kin, no care,
No burthen, save my care for you and yours:
And we have known each other all our lives,
And I have loved you longer than you know.'

Then answer'd Annie; tenderly she spoke:
'You have been as God's good angel in our house.

God bless you for it, God reward you for it,
Philip, with something happier than myself.
Can one love twice? can you be ever loved
As Enoch was? what is it that you ask?'
'I am content' he answer'd 'to be loved
A little after Enoch.' 'O' she cried,
Scared as it were, 'dear Philip, wait a while:
If Enoch comes—but Enoch will not come—
Yet wait a year, a year is not so long:
Surely I shall be wiser in a year:
O wait a little!' Philip sadly said
'Annie, as I have waited all my life
I well may wait a little.' 'Nay' she cried
'I am bound: you have my promise—in a year
Will you not bide your year as I bide mine?'
And Philip answer'd 'I will bide my year.'

Here both were mute, till Philip glancing up
Beheld the dead flame of the fallen day
Pass from the Danish barrow overhead;
Then fearing night and chill for Annie, rose
And sent his voice beneath him thro' the wood.
Up came the children laden with their spoil;
Then all descended to the port, and there
At Annie's door he paused and gave his hand,
Saying gently 'Annie, when I spoke to you,
That was your hour of weakness. I was wrong,
I am always bound to you, but you are free.'
Then Annie weeping answer'd 'I am bound.'

She spoke; and in one moment as it were,
While yet she went about her household ways,
Ev'n as she dwelt upon his latest words,
That he had loved her longer than she knew,
That autumn into autumn flash'd again,
And there he stood once more before her face,
Claiming her promise. 'Is it a year?' she ask'd.
'Yes, if the nuts' he said 'be ripe again:
Come out and see.' But she—she put him off—
So much to look to—such a change—a month—
Give her a month—she knew that she was bound—
A month—no more. Then Philip with his eyes
Full of that lifelong hunger, and his voice
Shaking a little like a drunkard's hand,
'Take your own time, Annie, take your own time.'
And Annie could have wept for pity of him;
And yet she held him on delayingly
With many a scarce-believable excuse,
Trying his truth and his long-sufferance,
Till half-another year had slipt away.

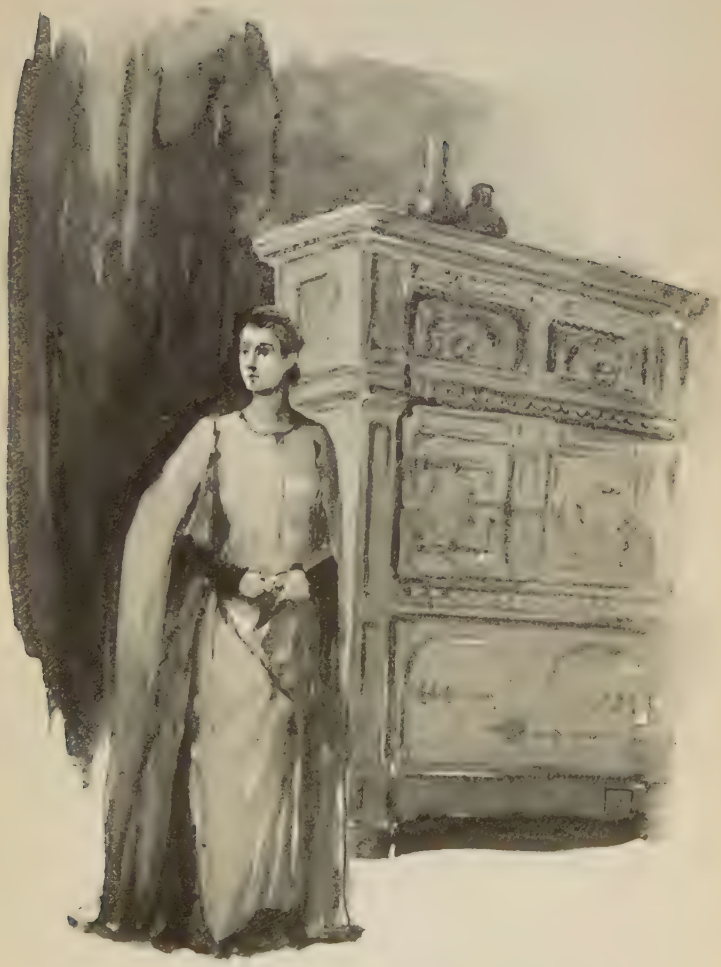
By this the lazy gossips of the port,
Abhorrent of a calculation crost,
Began to chafe as at a personal wrong.
Some thought that Philip did but trifle with her;
Some that she but held off to draw him on;
And others laugh'd at her and Philip too,
As simple folk that knew not their own minds,
And one, in whom all evil fancies clung
Like serpent eggs together, laughingly

Would hint at worse in either. Her own son
Was silent, tho' he often look'd his wish;
But evermore the daughter prest upon her
To wed the man so dear to all of them
And lift the household out of poverty;
And Philip's rosy face contracting grew
Careworn and wan; and all these things fell on her
Sharp as reproach.

At last one night it chanced
That Annie could not sleep, but earnestly
Pray'd for a sign 'my Enoch is he gone?'
Then compass'd round by the blind wall of night
Brook'd not the expectant terror of her heart,
Started from bed, and struck herself a light,
Then desperately seized the holy Book,
Suddenly set it wide to find a sign,
Suddenly put her finger on the text,
'Under the palm-tree.' That was nothing to her:
No meaning there: she closed the Book and slept:
When lo! her Enoch sitting on a height,
Under a palm-tree, over him the Sun:
'He is gone,' she thought, 'he is happy, he is singing
Hosanna in the highest: yonder shines
The Sun of Righteousness, and these be palms
Whereof the happy people strowing cried
"Hosanna in the highest!"' Here she woke,
Resolved, sent for him and said wildly to him
'There is no reason why we should not wed.'
'Then for God's sake,' he answer'd, 'both our sakes,
So you will wed me, let it be at once.'

So these were wed and merrily rang the bells,
Merrily rang the bells and they were wed.
But never merrily beat Annie's heart.
A footstep seem'd to fall beside her path,
She knew not whence; a whisper on her ear,
She knew not what; nor loved she to be left
Alone at home, nor ventured out alone.
What ail'd her then, that ere she enter'd, often
Her hand dwelt lingeringly on the latch,
Fearing to enter: Philip thought he knew:
Such doubts and fears were common to her state,
Being with child: but when her child was born,
Then her new child was as herself renew'd,
Then the new mother came about her heart,
Then her good Philip was her all-in-all,
And that mysterious instinct wholly died.

And where was Enoch? prosperously sail'd
The ship 'Good Fortune,' tho' at setting forth
The Biscay, roughly ridging eastward, shook
And almost overwhelm'd her, yet unvext
She slipt across the summer of the world,
Then after a long tumble about the Cape
And frequent interchange of foul and fair,
She passing thro' the summer world again,
The breath of heaven came continually
And sent her sweetly by the golden isles,



"UNCLASP'D THE WEDDED EAGLES OF HER BELT."—*Page 84.*

Till silent in her oriental haven.

There Enoch traded for himself, and bought
Quaint monsters for the market of those times,
A gilded dragon, also, for the babes.

Less lucky her home-voyage: at first indeed
Thro' many a fair sea-circle, day by day,
Scarce-rocking, her full-busted figure-head
Stared o'er the ripple feathering from her bows:
Then follow'd calms, and then winds variable,
Then baffling, a long course of them; and last
Storm, such as drove her under moonless heavens
Till hard upon the cry of 'breakers' came
The crash of ruin, and the loss of all
But Enoch and two others. Half the night,
Buoy'd upon floating tackle and broken spars,
These drifted, stranding on an isle at morn
Rich, but the loneliest in a lonely sea.

No want was there of human sustenance,
Soft fruitage, mighty nuts, and nourishing roots;
Nor save for pity was it hard to take
The helpless life so wild that it was tame.
There in a seaward-gazing mountain-gorge
They built, and thatch'd with leaves of palm, a hut,
Half hut, half native cavern. So the three,
Set in this Eden of all plenteousness,
Dwelt with eternal summer, ill-content.

For one, the youngest, hardly more than boy,
Hurt in that night of sudden ruin and wreck,
Lay lingering out a five-years' death-in-life.
They could not leave him. After he was gone,
The two remaining found a fallen stem;
And Enoch's comrade, careless of himself,
Fire-hollowing this in Indian fashion, fell
Sun-stricken, and that other lived alone.
In those two deaths he read God's warning 'wait.'

The mountain wooded to the peak, the lawns
And winding glades high up like ways to Heaven,
The slender coco's drooping crown of plumes,
The lightning flash of insect and of bird,
The lustre of the long convolvuluses
That coil'd around the stately stems, and ran
Ev'n to the limit of the land, the glows
And glories of the broad belt of the world,
All these he saw; but what he fain had seen
He could not see, the kindly human face,
Nor ever hear a kindly voice, but heard
The myriad shriek of wheeling ocean-fowl,
The league-long roller thundering on the reef,
The moving whisper of huge trees that branch'd
And blossom'd in the zenith, or the sweep
Of some precipitous rivulet to the wave,
As down the shore he ranged, or all day long
Sat often in the seaward-gazing gorge,
A shipwreck'd sailor, waiting for a sail:
No sail from day to day, but every day

The sunrise broken into scarlet shafts
Among the palms and ferns and precipices ;
The blaze upon the waters to the east ;
The blaze upon his island overhead ;
The blaze upon the waters to the west ;
Then the great stars that globed themselves in Heaven,
The hollower-bellowing ocean, and again
The scarlet shafts of sunrise—but no sail.

There often as he watch'd or seem'd to watch,
So still, the golden lizard on him paused,
A phantom made of many phantoms moved
Before him haunting him, or he himself
Moved haunting people, things and places, known
Far in a darker isle beyond the line ;
The babes, their babble, Annie, the small house,
The climbing street, the mill, the leafy lanes,
The peacock-yewtree and the lonely Hall,
The horse he drove, the boat he sold, the chill
November dawns and dewy-glooming downs,
The gentle shower, the smell of dying leaves,
And the low moan of leaden-color'd seas.

Once likewise, in the ringing of his ears,
Tho' faintly, merrily—far and far away—
He heard the pealing of his parish bells ;
Then, tho' he knew not wherefore, started up
Shuddering, and when the beauteous hateful isle
Return'd upon him, had not his poor heart
Spoken with That, which being everywhere
Lets none, who speaks with Him, seem all alone,
Surely the man had died of solitude.

Thus over Enoch's early-silvering head
The sunny and rainy seasons came and went
Year after year. His hopes to see his own,
And pace the sacred old familiar fields,
Not yet had perish'd, when his lonely doom
Came suddenly to an end. Another ship
(She wanted water) blown by baffling winds,
Like the Good Fortune, from her destined course,
Stay'd by this isle, not knowing where she lay :
For since the mate had seen at early dawn
Across a break on the mist-wreathen isle
The silent water slipping from the hills,
They sent a crew that landing burst away
In search of stream or fount, and fill'd the shores
With clamor. Downward from his mountain gorge
Stept the long-hair'd long-bearded solitary,
Brown, looking hardly human, strangely clad,
Muttering and mumbling, idiotlike it seem'd,
With inarticulate rage, and making signs
They knew not what : and yet he led the way
To where the rivulets of sweet water ran ;
And ever as he mingled with the crew,
And heard them talking, his long-bounden tongue
Was loosen'd, till he made them understand ;

Whom, when their casks were fill'd they took aboard :
And there the tale he utter'd brokenly.
Scarce-credited at first but more and more,
Amazed and melted all who listen'd to it :
And clothes they gave him and free passage home ;
But oft he work'd among the rest and shook
His isolation from him. None of these
Came from his country, or could answer him,
If question'd, aught of what he cared to know.
And dull the voyage was with long delays,
The vessel scarce sea-worthy ; but evermore
His fancy fled before the lazy wind
Returning, till beneath a clouded moon
He like a lover down thro' all his blood
Drew in the dewy meadowy morning-breath
Of England, blown across her ghostly wall :
And that same morning officers and men
Levied a kindly tax upon themselves,
Pitying the lonely man, and gave him it :
Then moving up the coast they landed him,
Ev'n in that harbor whence he sail'd before.

There Enoch spoke no word to any one,
But homeward—home—what home ? had he a home ?
His home, he walk'd. Bright was that afternoon,
Sunny but chill ; till drawn thro' either chasm,
Where either haven open'd on the deeps,
Roll'd a sea-haze and whelm'd the world in gray ;
Cut off the length of highway on before,
And left but narrow breadth to left and right
Of wither'd holt or tilth or pasturage.
On the nigh-naked tree the robin piped
Disconsolate, and thro' the dripping haze
The dead weight of the dead leaf bore it down :
Thicker the drizzle grew, deeper the gloom ;
Last, as it seem'd, a great mist-blotted light
Flared on him, and he came upon the place.

Then down the long street having slowly stolen,
His heart foreshadowing all calamity,
His eyes upon the stones, he reach'd the home
Where Annie lived and loved him, and his babes
In those far-off seven happy years were born ;
But finding neither light nor murmur there
(A bill of sale gleam'd thro' the drizzle) crept
Still downward thinking 'dead or dead to me !'

Down to the pool and narrow wharf he went,
Seeking a tavern which of old he knew,
A front of timber-crost antiquity,
So propt, worm-eaten, ruinously old,
He thought it must have gone ; but he was gone
Who kept it ; and his widow Miriam Lane,
With daily-dwindling profits held the house ;
A haunt of brawling seamen once, but now
Stiller, with yet a bed for wandering men
There Enoch rested silent many days.

But Miriam Lane was good and garrulous,
Nor let him be, but often breaking in,
Told him, with other annals of the port,
Not knowing—Enoch was so brown, so bow'd,
So broken—all the story of his house.
His baby's death, her growing poverty,
How Philip put her little ones to school,
And kept them in it, his long wooing her,
Her slow consent, and marriage, and the birth
Of Philip's child: and o'er his countenance
No shadow past, nor motion: any one,
Regarding, well had deem'd he felt the tale
Less than the teller: only when she closed
'Enoch, poor man, was cast away and lost'
He, shaking his gray head pathetically,
Repeated muttering 'cast away and lost;'
Again in deeper inward whispers 'lost!'

But Enoch yearn'd to see her face again;
'If I might look on her sweet face again
And know that she is happy.' So the thought
Haunted and harass'd him, and drove him forth,
At evening when the dull November day
Was growing duller twilight, to the hill.
There he sat down gazing on all below;
There did a thousand memories roll upon him,
Unspeakable for sadness. By and by
The ruddy square of comfortable light,
Far-blazing from the rear of Philip's house,
Allured him, as the beacon-blaze allures
The bird of passage, till he madly strikes
Against it, and beats out his weary life.

For Philip's dwelling fronted on the street,
The latest house to landward; but behind,
With one small gate that open'd on the waste,
Flourish'd a little garden square and wall'd:
And in it throve an ancient evergreen,
A yewtree, and all round it ran a walk
Of shingle, and a walk divided it:
But Enoch shunn'd the middle walk and stole
Up by the wall, behind the yew; and thence
That which he better might have shunn'd, if griefs
Like his have worse or better, Enoch saw.

For cups and silver on the burnish'd board
Sparkled and shone; so genial was the hearth:
And on the right hand of the hearth he saw
Philip, the slighted suitor of old times,
Stout, rosy, with his babe across his knees;
And o'er her second father stoopt a girl,
A later but a loftier Annie Lee,
Fair-hair'd and tall, and from her lifted hand
Dangled a length of ribbon and a ring
To tempt the babe, who rear'd his creasy arms,
Caught at and ever miss'd it, and they laugh'd;
And on the left hand of the hearth he saw
The mother glancing often toward her babe,
But turning now and then to speak with him,
Her son, who stood beside her tall and strong,
And saying that which pleased him, for he smiled.

Now when the dead man come to life beheld
His wife his wife no more, and saw the babe
Hers, yet not his, upon the father's knee,
And all the warmth, the peace, the happiness,
And his own children tall and beautiful,
And him, that other, reigning in his place,
Lord of his rights and of his children's love,—
Then he, tho' Miriam Lane had told him all,
Because things seen are mightier than things heard,
Stagger'd and shook, holding the branch, and fear'd
To send abroad a shrill and terrible cry,
Which in one moment, like the blast of doom,
Would shatter all the happiness of the hearth.

He therefore turning softly like a thief,
Lest the harsh shingle should grate underfoot,
And feeling all along the garden-wall,
Lest he should swoon and tumble and be found,
Crept to the gate, and open'd it, and closed,
As lightly as a sick man's chamber-door,
Behind him, and came out upon the waste.

And there he would have knelt, but that his knees
Were feeble, so that falling prone he dug
His fingers into the wet earth, and pray'd.

'Too hard to bear! why did they take me thence?
O God Almighty, blessed Saviour, Thou
That didst uphold me on my lonely isle,
Uphold me, Father, in my loneliness
A little longer! aid me, give me strength
Not to tell her, never to let her know.
Help me not to break in upon her peace.
My children too! must I not speak to these?
They know me not. I should betray myself.
Never: No father's kiss for me—the girl
So like her mother, and the boy, my son.'

There speech and thought and nature fail'd a little,
And he lay tranced; but when he rose and paced
Back toward his solitary home again,
All down the long and narrow street he went
Beating it in upon his weary brain,
As tho' it were the burthen of a song,
'Not to tell her, never to let her know.'

He was not all unhappy. His resolve
Upbore him, and firm faith, and evermore
Prayer from a living source within the will,
And beating up thro' all the bitter world,
Like fountains of sweet water in the sea,
Kept him a living soul. 'This miller's wife'
He said to Miriam 'that you spoke about,
Has she no fear that her first husband lives?'
'Ay, ay, poor soul' said Miriam, 'fear enow!
If you could tell her you had seen him dead,
Why, that would be her comfort;' and he thought
'After the Lord has call'd me she shall know,

I wait His time,' and Enoch set himself,
Scorning an alms, to work whereby to live.
Almost to all things could he turn his hand.
Cooper he was and carpenter, and wrought
To make the boatmen fishing-nets, or help'd
At lading and unlading the tall barks,
That brought the stinted commerce of those days;
Thus earn'd a scanty living for himself:
Yet since he did but labor for himself,
Work without hope, there was not life in it
Whereby the man could live; and as the year
Roll'd itself round again to meet the day
When Enoch had return'd, a languor came
Upon him, gentle sickness, gradually
Weakening the man, till he could do no more,
But kept the house, his chair, and last his bed.
And Enoch bore his weakness cheerfully.
For sure no gladlier does the stranded wreck
See thro' the gray skirts of a lifting squall
The boat that bears the hope of life approach
To save the life despair'd of, than he saw
Death dawning on him, and the close of all.

For thro' that dawning gleam'd a kindlier hope
On Enoch thinking 'after I am gone,
Then may she learn I lov'd her to the last.'
He call'd aloud for Miriam Lane and said
'Woman, I have a secret—only swear,
Before I tell you—swear upon the book
Not to reveal it, till you see me dead.'
'Dead,' clamor'd the good woman, 'hear him talk!
I warrant, man, that we shall bring you round.'
'Swear' added Enoch sternly, 'on the book.'
And on the book, half-frighted, Miriam swore.
Then Enoch rolling his gray eyes upon her,
'Did you know Enoch Arden of this town?'
'Know him?' she said, 'I knew him far away.
Ay, ay, I mind him coming down the street;
Held his head high, and cared for no man, he.'
Slowly and sadly Enoch answer'd her;
'His head is low, and no man cares for him.
I think I have not three days more to live;
I am the man.' At which the woman gave
A half-incredulous, half-hysterical cry.
'You Arden, you! nay,—sure he was a foot
Higher than you be.' Enoch said again
'My God has bow'd me down to what I am;
My grief and solitude have broken me;
Nevertheless, know you that I am he
Who married—but that name has twice been changed—
I married her who married Philip Ray.
Sit, listen.' Then he told her of his voyage,
His wreck, his lonely life, his coming back,
His gazing in on Annie, his resolve,
And how he kept it. As the woman heard,
Fast flow'd the current of her easy tears,
While in her heart she yearn'd incessantly
To rush abroad all round the little haven,
Proclaiming Enoch Arden and his woes;

But awed and promise-bounden she forbore,
Saying only 'See your bairns before you go!
Eh, let me fetch 'em, Arden,' and arose
Eager to bring them down, for Enoch hung
A moment on her words, but then replied:

'Woman, disturb me not now at the last,
But let me hold my purpose till I die.
Sit down again; mark me and understand,
While I have power to speak. I charge you now,
When you shall see her, tell her that I died
Blessing her, praying for her, loving her;
Save for the bar between us, loving her
As when she laid her head beside my own.
And tell my daughter Annie, whom I saw
So like her mother, that my latest breath
Was spent in blessing her and praying for her.
And tell my son that I died blessing him.
And say to Philip that I blest him too;
He never meant us anything but good.
But if my children care to see me dead,
Who hardly knew me living, let them come,
I am their father; but she must not come,
For my dead face would vex her after-life.
And now there is but one of all my blood
Who will embrace me in the world-to-be:
This hair is his: she cut it off and gave it,
And I have borne it with me all these years.
And thought to bear it with me to my grave;
But now my mind is changed, for I shall see him,
My babe in bliss: wherefore when I am gone,
Take, give her this, for it may comfort her:
It will moreover be a token to her,
That I am he.'

He ceased; and Miriam Lane
Made such a voluble answer promising all,
That once again he roll'd his eyes upon her
Repeating all he wish'd, and once again
She promised.

Then the third night after this,
While Enoch slumber'd motionless and pale,
And Miriam watch'd and dozed at intervals,
There came so loud a calling of the sea,
That all the houses in the haven rang.
He woke, he rose, he spread his arms abroad
Crying with a loud voice 'A sail! a sail!
I am saved;' and so fell back and spoke no more.

So past the strong heroic soul away.
And when they buried him the little port
Had seldom seen a costlier funeral.

THE BROOK.

HERE, by this brook, we parted; I to the East
And he for Italy—too late—too late:
One whom the strong sons of the world despise;
For lucky rhymes to him were scrip and share,

And mellow metres more than cent for cent;
Nor could he understand how money breeds,
Thought it a dead thing; yet himself could make
The thing that is not as the thing that is.
O had he lived! In our schoolbooks we say,
Of those that held their heads above the crowd,
They flourish'd then or then; but life in him
Could scarce be said to flourish, only touch'd
On such a time as goes before the leaf,
When all the wood stands in a mist of green,
And nothing perfect: yet the brook he loved,
For which, in branding summers of Bengal,
Or ev'n the sweet half-English Neilgherry air
I panted, seems, as I re-listen to it,
Prattling the primrose fancies of the boy,
To me that loved him; for 'O brook,' he says,
'O babbling brook,' says Edmund in his rhyme,
'Whence come you?' and the brook, why not? replies.

I come from haunts of coot and hern,
I make a sudden sally,
And sparkle out among the fern,
To bicker down a valley.

By thirty hills I hurry down,
Or slip between the ridges,
By twenty thorps, a little town,
And half a hundred bridges.

Till last by Philip's farm I flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever.

'Poor lad, he died at Florence, quite worn out,
Travelling to Naples. There is Darnley bridge,
It has more ivy; there the river; and there
Stands Philip's farm where brook and river meet.

I chatter over stony ways,
In little sharps and trebles,
I bubble into eddying bays,
I babble on the pebbles.

With many a curve my banks I fret
By many a field and fallow,
And many a fairy foreland set
With willow-weed and mallow.

I chatter, chatter, as I flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever.

'But Philip chatter'd more than brook or bird;
Old Philip; all about the fields you caught
His weary daylong chirping, like the dry
High-elbow'd grigs that leap in summer grass.

I wind about, and in and out,
With here a blossom sailing,
And here and there a lusty trout,
And here and there a grayling,

And here and there a foamy flake
Upon me, as I travel
With many a silvery waterbreak
Above the golden gravel,

And draw them all along, and flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever.

'O darling Katie Willows, his one child!
A maiden of our century, yet most meek;
A daughter of our meadows, yet not coarse;
Straight, but as lissome as a hazel wand;
Her eyes a bashful azure, and her hair

In gloss and hue the chestnut, when the shell
Divides threefold to show the fruit within.

'Sweet Katie, once I did her a good turn,
Her and her far-off cousin and betrothed,
James Willows, of one name and heart with her.
For here I came, twenty years back—the week
Before I parted with poor Edmund; crost
By that old bridge which, half in ruins then,
Still makes a hoary eyebrow for the gleam
Beyond it, where the waters marry—crost,
Whistling a random bar of Bonny Doon,
And push'd at Philip's garden-gate. The gate,
Half-parted from a weak and scolding hinge,
Stuck; and he clamor'd from a casement, "Run"
To Katie somewhere in the walks below,
"Run, Katie!" Katie never ran: she moved
To meet me, winding under woodbine bowers,
A little flutter'd, with her eyelids down,
Fresh apple-blossom, blushing for a boon.

'What was it? less of sentiment than sense
Had Katie; not illiterate; nor of those
Who dabbling in the fount of fictive tears,
And nursed by mealy-mouth'd philanthropies,
Divorce the Feeling from her mate the Deed.

'She told me. She and James had quarrell'd. Why?
What cause of quarrel? None, she said, no cause;
James had no cause: but when I prest the cause,
I learnt that James had flickering jealousies
Which anger'd her. Who anger'd James? I said.
But Katie snatch'd her eyes at once from mine,
And sketching with her slender pointed foot
Some figure like a wizard pentagram
On garden gravel, let my query pass
Unclaim'd, in flushing silence, till I ask'd
If James were coming. "Coming every day,"
She answer'd, "ever longing to explain,
But evermore her father came across
With some long-winded tale, and broke him short;
And James departed vext with him and her."
How could I help her? "Would I—was it wrong?"
(Claspt hands and that petitionary grace
Of sweet seventeen subdued me ere she spoke)
"O would I take her father for one hour,
For one half-hour, and let him talk to me!"
And even while she spoke, I saw where James
Made toward us, like a wader in the surf,
Beyond the brook, waist-deep in meadow-sweet.

'O Katie, what I suffer'd for your sake!
For in I went, and call'd old Philip out
To show the farm: full willingly he rose:
He led me thro' the short sweet-smelling lanes
Of his wheat-suburb, babbling as he went.

He praised his land, his horses, his machines;
He praised his ploughs, his cows, his hogs, his dogs;
He praised his hens, his geese, his guinea-hens;
His pigeons, who in session on their roofs
Approved him, bowing at their own deserts:
Then from the plaintive mother's teat he took
Her blind and shuddering puppies, naming each,
And naming those, his friends, for whom they were:
Then crost the common into Darnley chase
To show Sir Arthur's deer. In copse and fern
Twinkled the innumerable ear and tail.
Then, seated on a serpent-rooted beech,
He pointed out a pasturing colt, and said:
"That was the four-year-old I sold the Squire."
And there he told a long long-winded tale
Of how the Squire had seen the colt at grass,
And how it was the thing his daughter wish'd,
And how he sent the bailiff to the farm
To learn the price, and what the price he ask'd,
And how the bailiff swore that he was mad,
But he stood firm; and so the matter hung;
He gave them line: and five days after that
He met the bailiff at the Golden Fleece,
Who then and there had offer'd something more,
But he stood firm; and so the matter hung;
He knew the man; the colt would fetch its price;
He gave them line: and how by chance at last
(It might be May or April, he forgot,
The last of April or the first of May)
He found the bailiff riding by the farm,
And, talking from the point, he drew him in,
And there he mellow'd all his heart with ale,
Until they closed a bargain, hand in hand.

'Then, while I breathed in sight of haven, he,
Poor fellow, could he help it? recommenced,
And ran thro' all the coltish chronicle,
Wild Will, Black Bess, Tantivy, Tallyho,
Reform, White Rose, Bellerophon, the Jilt,
Arbaces, and Phenomenon, and the rest,
Till, not to die a listener, I arose,
And with me Philip, talking still; and so
We turn'd our foreheads from the falling sun,
And following our own shadows thrice as long
As when they follow'd us from Philip's door,
Arrived, and found the sun of sweet content
Re-risen in Katie's eyes, and all things well.

I steal by lawns and grassy plots,
I slide by hazel covers;
I move the sweet forget-me-nots
That grow for happy lovers.

I slip, I slide, I gloom, I glance,
Among my skimming swallows;
I make the netted sunbeam dance
Against my sandy shallows.

I murmur under moon and stars
In brambly wildernesses;
I linger by my shingly bars;
I loiter round my cresses;

And out again I curve and flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever.

Yes, men may come and go; and these are gone,
All gone. My dearest brother, Edmund, sleeps,
Not by the well-known stream and rustic spire,
But unfamiliar Arno, and the dome
Of Brunelleschi; sleeps in peace: and he,
Poor Philip, of all his lavish waste of words
Remains the lean P. W. on his tomb:
I scraped the lichen from it: Katie walks
By the long wash of Australasian seas
Far off, and holds her head to other stars,
And breathes in April-autumns. All are gone.'

So Lawrence Aylmer, seated on a stile
In the long hedge, and rolling in his mind
Old waifs of rhyme, and bowing o'er the brook
A tonsured head in middle age forlorn,
Mused, and was mute. On a sudden a low breath
Of tender air made tremble in the hedge
The fragile bindweed-bells and briony rings;
And he look'd up. There stood a maiden near,
Waiting to pass. In much amaze he stared
On eyes a bashful azure, and on hair
In gloss and hue the chestnut, when the shell
Divides threefold to show the fruit within:
Then, wondering, ask'd her 'Are you from the farm?'
'Yes,' answer'd she. 'Pray stay a little: pardon me;
What do they call you?' 'Katie.' 'That were strange.
What surname?' 'Willows.' 'No!' 'That is my name.'
'Indeed!' and here he look'd so self-perplext,
That Katie laugh'd, and laughing blush'd, till he
Laugh'd also, but as one before he wakes,
Who feels a glimmering strangeness in his dream.
Then looking at her; 'Too happy, fresh and fair,
Too fresh and fair in our sad world's best bloom,
To be the ghost of one who bore your name
About these meadows, twenty years ago.'

'Have you not heard?' said Katie, 'we came back.
We bought the farm we tenanted before.
Am I so like her? so they said on board.
Sir, if you knew her in her English days,
My mother, as it seems you did, the days
That most she loves to talk of, come with me.
My brother James is in the harvest-field:
But she—you will be welcome—O, come in!'

AYLMER'S FIELD.

1793.

DUST are our frames; and, gilded dust, our pride
Looks only for a moment whole and sound;
Like that long-buried body of the king,
Found lying with his urns and ornaments,
Which at a touch of light, an air of heaven,
Slipt into ashes, and was found no more.

Here is a story which in rougher shape

Came from a grizzled cripple, whom I saw
Sunning himself in a waste field alone—
Old, and a mine of memories—who had served,
Long since, a bygone Rector of the place,
And been himself a part of what he told.

SIR AYLMER AYLMER, that almighty man,
The county God—in whose capacious hall,
Hung with a hundred shields, the family tree
Sprang from the midriff of a prostrate king—
Whose blazing wyvern weathercock'd the spire,
Stood from his walls and wing'd his entry-gates
And swang besides on many a windy sign—
Whose eyes from under a pyramidal head
Saw from his windows nothing save his own—
What lovelier of his own had he than her,
His only child, his Edith, whom he loved
As heiress and not heir regretfully?
But 'he that marries her marries her name.'
This fiat somewhat soothed himself and wife,
His wife a faded beauty of the Baths,
Insipid as the Queen upon a card;
Her all of thought and bearing hardly more
Than his own shadow in a sickly sun.

A land of hops and poppy-mingled corn,
Little about it stirring save a brook!
A sleepy land, where under the same wheel
The same old rut would deepen year by year;
Where almost all the village had one name;
Where Aylmer followed Aylmer at the Hall
And Averill Averill at the Rectory
Thrice over; so that Rectory and Hall,
Bound in an immemorial intimacy,
Were open to each other; tho' to dream
That Love could bind them closer well had made
The hoar hair of the Baronet bristle up
With horror, worse than had he heard his priest
Preach an inverted scripture, sons of men
Daughters of God; so sleepy was the land.

And might not Averill, had he will'd it so,
Somewhere beneath his own low range of roofs,
Have also set his many-shielded tree?
There was an Aylmer-Averill marriage once.
When the red rose was redder than itself,
And York's white rose as red as Lancaster's,
With wounded peace which each had prick'd to death.
'Not proven' Averill said, or laughingly
'Some other race of Averills'—prov'n or no,
What cared he? what, if other or the same?
He lean'd not on his fathers but himself.
But Leolin, his brother, living oft
With Averill, and a year or two before
Call'd to the bar, but ever call'd away
By one low voice to one dear neighborhood,
Would often, in his walks with Edith, claim
A distant kinship to the gracious blood
That shook the heart of Edith hearing him.

Sanguine he was: a but less vivid hue
Than of that islet in the chestnut-bloom
Flamed in his cheek; and eager eyes, that still
Took joyful note of all things joyful, beam'd,
Beneath a manelike mass of rolling gold,
Their best and brightest, when they dwelt on hers,
Edith, whose pensive beauty, perfect else,
But subject to the season or the mood,
Shone like a mystic star between the less
And greater glory varying to and fro,
We know not wherefore; bounteously made,
And yet so finely, that a troublous touch
Thinn'd, or would seem to thin her in a day,
A joyous to dilate, as toward the light.
And these had been together from the first.
Leolin's first nurse was, five years after, hers:
So much the boy foreran; but when his date
Doubled her own, for want of playmates, he
(Since Averill was a decad and a half
His elder, and their parents underground)
Had tost his ball and flown his kite, and roll'd
His hoop to pleasure Edith, with her dipt
Against the rush of the air in the prone swing,
Made blossom-ball or daisy-chain, arranged
Her garden, sow'd her name and kept it green
In living letters, told her fairy-tales,
Show'd her the fairy footings on the grass,
The little dells of cowslip, fairy palms,
The petty marestail forest, fairy pines,
Or from the tiny pitted target blew
What look'd a flight of fairy arrows aim'd
All at one mark, all hitting: make-believes
For Edith and himself: or else he forged,
But that was later, boyish histories
Of battle, bold adventure, dungeon, wreck,
Flights, terrors, sudden rescues, and true love
Crown'd after trial; sketches rude and faint,
But where a passion yet unborn perhaps
Lay hidden as the music of the moon
Sleeps in the plain eggs of the nightingale.
And thus together, save for college-times
Or Temple-eaten terms, a couple, fair
As ever painter painted, poet sang,
Or Heaven in lavish bounty moulded, grew.
And more and more, the maiden woman-grown,
He wasted hours with Averill; there, when first
The tented winter-field was broken up
Into that phalanx of the summer spears
That soon should wear the garland; there again
When burr and bine were gather'd; lastly there
At Christmas; ever welcome at the Hall,
On whose dull sameness his full tide of youth
Broke with a phosphorescence charming even
My lady; and the Baronet yet had laid
No bar between them: dull and self-involved,
Tall and erect, but bending from his height
With half-allowing smiles for all the world,
And mighty courteous in the main—his pride
Lay deeper than to wear it as his ring—
He, like an Aylmer in his Aylmerism,

Would care no more for Leolin's walking with her
Than for his old Newfoundland's, when they ran
To loose him at the stables, for he rose
Twofooted at the limit of his chain,
Roaring to make a third: and how should Love,
Whom the cross-lightnings of four chancemet eyes
Flash into fiery life from nothing, follow
Such dear familiarities of dawn?
Seldom, but when he does, Master of all.

So these young hearts not knowing that they loved,
Not she at least, nor conscious of a bar
Between them, nor by plight or broken ring
Bound, but an immemorial intimacy,
Wander'd at will, and oft accompanied
By Averill: his, a brother's love, that hung
With wings of brooding shelter o'er her peace,
Might have been other, save for Leolin's—
Who knows? but so they wander'd, hour by hour
Gather'd the blossom that rebloom'd, and drank
The magic cup that fill'd itself anew.

A whisper half reveal'd her to herself.
For out beyond her lodges, where the brook
Vocal, with here and there a silence, ran
By sallowy rims, arose the laborers' homes,
A frequent haunt of Edith, on low knolls
That dimpling died into each other, huts
At random scatter'd, each a nest in bloom.
Her art, her hand, her counsel all had wrought
About them: here was one that, summer-blanch'd,
Was parcel-bearded with the traveller's-joy
In Autumn, parcel ivy-clad; and here
The warm-blue breathings of a hidden hearth
Broke from a bower of vine and honeysuckle:
One look'd all rosetree, and another wore
A close-set robe of jasmine sown with stars:
This had a rosy sea of gillyflowers
About it; this, a milky-way on earth,
Like visions in the Northern dreamer's heavens,
A lily-avenue climbing to the doors;
One, almost to the martin-haunted eaves
A summer burial deep in hollyhocks;
Each, its own charm; and Edith's everywhere;
And Edith ever visitant with him,
He but less loved than Edith, of her poor:
For she—so lowly-lovely and so loving,
Queenly responsive when the loyal hand
Rose from the clay it work'd in as she past,
Not sowing hedgerow texts and passing by,
Nor dealing goodly counsel from a height
That makes the lowest hate it, but a voice
Of comfort and an open hand of help,
A splendid presence flattering the poor roofs
Revered as theirs, but kindlier than themselves
To ailing wife or wailing infancy
Or old bedridden palsy,—was adored;
He, loved for her and for himself. A grasp
Having the warmth and muscle of the heart,
A childly way with children, and a laugh
Ringing like proven golden coinage true,

Were no false passport to that easy realm,
Where once with Leolin at her side the girl,
Nursing a child, and turning to the warmth
The tender pink five-beaded baby-soles,
Heard the good mother softly whisper 'Bless,
God bless 'em: marriages are made in Heaven.'

A flash of semi-jealousy clear'd it to her.
My lady's Indian kinsman unannounced
With half a score of swarthy faces came.
His own, tho' keen and bold and soldierly
Sear'd by the close ecliptic, was not fair;
Fairer his talk, a tongue that ruled the hour,
Tho' seeming boastful: so when first he dash'd
Into the chronicle of a deedful day,
Sir Aylmer half forgot his lazy smile
Of patron 'Good! my lady's kinsman! good!'
My lady with her fingers interlock'd,
And rotatory thumbs on silken knees,
Call'd all her vital spirits into each ear
To listen: unawares they flitted off,
Busying themselves about the flowerage
That stood from out a stiff brocade in which,
The meteor of a splendid season, she,
Once with this kinsman, ah so long ago,
Stept thro' the stately minuet of those days:
But Edith's eager fancy hurried with him
Snatch'd thro' the perilous passes of his life:
Till Leolin ever watchful of her eye,
Hated him with a momentary hate.
Wife-hunting, as the rumor ran, was he:
I know not, for he spoke not, only shower'd
His oriental gifts on everyone
And most on Edith: like a storm he came,
And shook the house, and like a storm he went.

Among the gifts he left her (possibly
He flow'd and ebb'd uncertain, to return
When others had been tested) there was one,
A dagger, in rich sheath with jewels on it
Sprinkled about in gold that branch'd itself
Fine as ice-ferns on January panes
Made by a breath. I know not whence at first,
Nor of what race, the work; but as he told
The story, storming a hill-fort of thieves
He got it; for their captain after fight,
His comrades having fought their last below,
Was climbing up the valley; at whom he shot:
Down from the beetling crag to which he clung
Tumbled the tawny rascal at his feet,
This dagger with him, which when now admired
By Edith whom his pleasure was to please,
At once the costly Sahib yielded to her.

And Leolin, coming after he was gone,
Tost over all her presents petulantly.
And when she show'd the wealthy scabbard, saying
'Look what a lovely piece of workmanship!'
Slight was his answer 'Well—I care not for it:'
Then playing with the blade he prick'd his hand,
'A gracious gift to give a lady, this!'
'But would it be more gracious' ask'd the girl

'Were I to give this gift of his to one
That is no lady?' 'Gracious? No' said he.
'Me?—but I cared not for it. O pardon me,
I seem to be ungraciousness itself.'
'Take it' she added sweetly, 'tho' his gift;
For I am more ungracious ev'n than you,
I care not for it either;' and he said
'Why then I love it: but Sir Aylmer past,
And neither loved nor liked the thing he heard.

The next day came a neighbor. Blues and reds
They talk'd of: blues were sure of it, he thought:
Then of the latest fox—where started—kill'd
In such a bottom: 'Peter had the brush,
My Peter, first:' and did Sir Aylmer know
That great pock-pitten fellow had been caught?
Then made his pleasure echo, hand to hand,
And rolling as it were the substance of it
Between his palms a moment up and down—
'The birds were warm, the birds were warm upon him;
We have him now:' and had Sir Aylmer heard—
Nay, but he must—the land was ringing of it—
This blacksmith border-marriage—one they knew—
Raw from the nursery—who could trust a child?
That cursed France with her egalities!
And did Sir Aylmer (deferentially
With nearing chair and lower'd accent) think—
For people talk'd—that it was wholly wise
To let that handsome fellow Averill walk
So freely with his daughter? people talk'd—
The boy might get a notion into him;
The girl might be entangled ere she knew.
Sir Aylmer Aylmer slowly stiffening spoke:
'The girl and boy, Sir, know their differences!'
'Good,' said his friend, 'but watch!' and he, 'Enough,
More than enough, Sir! I can guard my own.'
They parted, and Sir Aylmer Aylmer watch'd.

Pale, for on her the thunders of the house
Had fallen first, was Edith that same night;
Pale as the Jephtha's daughter, a rough piece
Of early rigid color, under which
Withdrawing by the counter door to that
Which Leolin open'd, she cast back upon him
A piteous glance, and vanish'd. He, as one
Caught in a burst of unexpected storm,
And pelted with outrageous epithets,
Turning beheld the Powers of the House
On either side the hearth, indignant; her,
Cooling her false cheek with a featherfan,
Him, glaring, by his own stale devil spurr'd,
And, like a beast hard-ridden, breathing hard.
'Ungenerous, dishonorable, base,
Presumptuous! trusted as he was with her,
The sole succeeder to their wealth, their lands,
The last remaining pillar of their house,
The one transmitter of their ancient name,
Their child.' 'Our child!' 'Our heiress!' 'Ours!' for still,

"AND IN HIS CHAIR HIMSELF UPREAR'D."—*Page 87.*

Like echoes from beyond a hollow, came
Her sicklier iteration. Last he said,
'Boy, mark me! for your fortunes are to make.
I swear you shall not make them out of mine.
Now inasmuch as you have practised on her,
Perplext her, made her half forget herself,
Swerve from her duty to herself and us—
Things in an Aylmer deem'd impossible,
Far as we track ourselves—I say that this—
Else I withdraw favor and countenance
From you and yours for ever—shall you do.
Sir, when you see her—but you shall not see her—
No, you shall write, and not to her, but me:
And you shall say that having spoken with me,
And after look'd into yourself, you find
That you meant nothing—as indeed you know
That you meant nothing. Such a match as this!
Impossible, prodigious!' These were words,
As meted by his measure of himself,
Arguing boundless forbearance: after which,
And Leolin's horror-stricken answer, 'I
So foul a traitor to myself and her,
Never oh never,' for about as long
As the wind-hover hangs in balance, paused
Sir Aylmer reddening from the storm within,
Then broke all bonds of courtesy, and crying
'Boy, should I find you by my doors again,
My men shall lash you from them like a dog;
Hence!' with a sudden execration drove
The footstool from before him, and arose;
So, stammering 'scoundrel' out of teeth that ground
As in a dreadful dream, while Leolin still
Retreated half-aghast, the fierce old man
Follow'd, and under his own lintel stood
Storming with lifted hands, a hoary face
Meet for the reverence of the hearth, but now,
Beneath a pale and unimpassion'd moon,
Vext with unworthy madness, and deform'd.

Slowly and conscious of the rageful eye
That watch'd him, till he heard the ponderous door
Close, crashing with long echoes thro' the land,
Went Leolin; then, his passions all in flood
And masters of his motion, furiously
Down thro' the bright lawns to his brother's ran,
And foam'd away his heart at Averill's ear:
Whom Averill solaced as he might, amazed:
The man was his, had been his father's, friend:
He must have seen, himself had seen it long;
He must have known, himself had known: besides,
He never yet had set his daughter forth
Here in the woman-markets of the west,
Where our Caucasians let themselves be sold.
Some one, he thought, had slander'd Leolin to him.
'Brother, for I have loved you more as son

Than brother, let me tell you: I myself—
What is their pretty saying? jilted, is it?
Jilted I was: I say it for your peace.
Pain'd, and, as bearing in myself the shame
The woman should have borne, humiliated,
I lived for years a stunted sunless life;
Till after our good parents past away
Watching your growth, I seem'd again to grow.
Leolin, I almost sin in envying you:
The very whitest lamb in all my fold
Loves you: I know her: the worst thought she has
Is whiter even than her pretty hand:
She must prove true: for, brother, where two fight
The strongest wins, and truth and love are strength,
And you are happy: let her parents be.

But Leolin cried out the more upon them—
Insolent, brainless, heartless! heiress, wealth,
Their wealth, their heiress! wealth enough was theirs
For twenty matches. Were he lord of this,
Why twenty boys and girls should marry on it,
And forty blest ones bless him, and himself
Be wealthy still, ay wealthier. He believed
This filthy marriage-hindering Mammon made
The harlot of the cities: nature crost
Was mother of the foul adulteries
That saturate soul with body. Name, too! name,
Their ancient name! they *might* be proud; its worth
Was being Edith's. Ah how pale she had look'd
Darling, to-night! they must have rated her
Beyond all tolerance. These old pheasant-lords,
These partridge-breeders of a thousand years,
Who had mildew'd in their thousands, doing nothing
Since Egbert—why, the greater their disgrace!
Fall back upon a name! rest, rot in that!
Not *keep* it noble, make it nobler? fools,
With such a vantage-ground for nobleness!
He had known a man, a quintessence of man,
The life of all—who madly loved—and he,
Thwarted by one of these old father-fools,
Had rioted his life out, and made an end.
He would not do it! her sweet face and faith
Held him from that: but he had powers, he knew it:
Back would he to his studies, make a name,
Name, fortune too: the world should ring of him
To shame these mouldy Aylmers in their graves:
Chancellor, or what is greatest would he be—
'O brother, I am grieved to learn your grief—
Give me my fling, and let me say my say.'

At which, like one that sees his own excess,
And easily forgives it as his own,
He laugh'd; and then was mute; but presently
Wept like a storm: and honest Averill seeing
How low his brother's mood had fallen, fetch'd
His richest beeswing from a binn reserved
For banquets, praised the waning red, and told

The vintage—when *this* Aylmer came of age—
Then drank and past it; till at length the two,
Tho' Leolin flamed and fell again, agreed
That much allowance must be made for men.
After an angry dream this kindlier glow
Faded with morning, but his purpose held.

Yet once by night again the lovers met,
A perilous meeting under the tall pines
That darken'd all the northward of her Hall.
Him, to her meek and modest bosom prest
In agony, she promised that no force,
Persuasion, no, nor death could alter her:
He, passionately hopefuller, would go,
Labor for his own Edith, and return
In such a sunlight of prosperity
He should not be rejected. 'Write to me!
They loved me, and because I love their child
They hate me: there is war between us, dear,
Which breaks all bonds but ours; we must remain
Sacred to one another.' So they talk'd,
Poor children, for their comfort: the wind blew;
The rain of heaven, and their own bitter tears,
Tears, and the careless rain of heaven, mixt
Upon their faces, as they kiss'd each other
In darkness, and above them roar'd the pine.

So Leolin went; and as we task ourselves
To learn a language known but smatteringly
In phrases here and there at random, toil'd
Mastering the lawless science of our law,
That codeless myriad of precedent,
That wilderness of single instances,
Thro' which a few, by wit or fortune led,
May beat a pathway out to wealth and fame.
The jests, that flash'd about the pleader's room,
Lightning of the hour, the pun, the scurrilous tale,—
Old scandals buried now seven decads deep
In other scandals that have lived and died,
And left the living scandal that shall die—
Were dead to him already; bent as he was
To make disproof of scorn, and strong in hopes,
And prodigal of all brain-labor he,
Charier of sleep, and wine, and exercise,
Except when for a breathing-while at eve,
Some niggard fraction of an hour, he ran
Beside the river-bank: and then indeed
Harder the times were, and the hands of power
Were bloodier, and the according hearts of men
Seem'd harder too; but the soft river-breeze,
Which fann'd the gardens of that rival rose
Yet fragrant in a heart remembering
His former talks with Edith, on him breathed
Far purelier in his rushings to and fro,
After his books, to flush his blood with air,
Then to his books again. My lady's cousin,
Half-sickening of his pension'd afternoon,
Drove in upon the student once or twice,

Ran a Malayan amuck against the times,
Had golden hopes for France and all mankind,
Answer'd all queries touching those at home
With a heaved shoulder and a saucy smile,
And fain had haled him out into the world,
And air'd him there: his nearer friend would say
'Screw not the chord too sharply lest it snap.'
Then left alone he pluck'd her dagger forth
From where his worldless heart had kept it warm,
Kissing his vows upon it like a knight.
And wrinkled benchers often talk'd of him
Approvingly, and prophesied his rise:
For heart, I think, help'd head: her letters too,
Tho' far between, and coming fitfully
Like broken music, written as she found
Or made occasion, being strictly watch'd,
Charm'd him thro' every labyrinth till he saw
An end, a hope, a light breaking upon him.

But they that cast her spirit into flesh,
Her worldly-wise begetters, plagued themselves
To sell her, those good parents, for her good.
Whatever eldest-born of rank or wealth
Might lie within their compass, him they lured
Into their net made pleasant by the baits
Of gold and beauty, wooing him to woo.
So month by month the noise about their doors,
And distant blaze of those dull banquets, made
The nightly wirer of their innocent hare
Falter before he took it. All in vain.
Sullen, defiant, pitying, wroth, return'd
Leolin's rejected rivals from their suit
So often, that the folly taking wings
Slipt o'er those lazy limits down the wind
With rumor, and became in other fields
A mockery to the yeomen over ale,
And laughter to their lords: but those at home,
As hunters round a hunted creature draw
The cordon close and closer toward the death,
Narrow'd her goings out and comings in;
Forbad her first the house of Averill,
Then closed her access to the wealthier farms,
Last from her own home-circle of the poor
They barr'd her: yet she bore it: yet her cheek
Kept color: wondrous! but, O mystery!
What amulet drew her down to that old oak,
So old, that twenty years before, a part
Falling had let appear the brand of John—
Once grovelike, each huge arm a tree, but now
The broken base of a black tower, a cave
Of touchwood, with a single flourishing spray.
There the manorial lord too curiously
Raking in that millennial touchwood-dust
Found for himself a bitter treasure-trove;
Burst his own wyvern on the seal, and read
Writhing a letter from his child, for which
Came at the moment Leolin's emissary,
A crippled lad, and coming turn'd to fly,

But scared with threats of jail and halter gave
To him that fluster'd his poor parish wits
The letter which he brought, and swore besides
To play their go-between as heretofore
Nor let them know themselves betray'd; and then,
Soul-stricken at their kindness to him, went
Hating his own lean heart and miserable.

Thenceforward oft from out a despot dream
The father panting woke, and oft, as dawn
Aroused the black republic on his elms,
Sweeping the frothfly from the fescue brush'd
Thro' the dim meadow toward his treasure-trove,
Seized it, took home, and to my lady,—who made
A downward crescent of her minion mouth,
Listless in all despondence,—read; and tore,
As if the living passion symbol'd there
Were living nerves to feel the rent; and burnt,
Now chafing at his own great self defied,
Now striking on huge stumbling-blocks of scorn
In babyisms, and dear diminutives
Scatter'd all over the vocabulary
Of such a love as like a chidden child,
After much wailing, hush'd itself at last
Hopeless of answer: then tho' Averill wrote
And bad him with good heart sustain himself—
All would be well—the lover heeded not,
But passionately restless came and went,
And rustling once at night about the place,
There by a keeper shot at, slightly hurt,
Raging return'd: nor was it well for her
Kept to the garden now, and grove of pines,
Watch'd even there; and one was set to watch
The watcher, and Sir Aylmer watch'd them all,
Yet bitterer from his readings: once indeed,
Warm'd with his wines, or taking pride in her,
She look'd so sweet, he kiss'd her tenderly
Not knowing what possess'd him: that one kiss
Was Leolin's one strong rival upon earth;
Seconded, for my lady follow'd suit,
Seem'd hope's returning rose: and then ensued
A Martin's summer of his faded love,
Or ordeal by kindness; after this
He seldom crost his child without a sneer;
The mother flow'd in shallower acrimonies:
Never one kindly smile, one kindly word:
So that the gentle creature shut from all
Her charitable use, and face to face
With twenty months of silence, slowly lost
Nor greatly cared to lose, her hold on life.
Last, some low fever ranging round to spy
The weakness of a people or a house,
Like flies that haunt a wound, or deer, or men,
Or almost all that is, hurting the hurt—
Save Christ as we believe him—found the girl
And flung her down upon a couch of fire,
Where careless of the household faces near,

And crying upon the name of Leolin,
She, and with her the race of Aylmer, past.

Star to star vibrates light: may soul to soul
Strike thro' a finer element of her own?
So,—from afar,—touch as at once? or why
That night, that moment, when she named his name,
Did the keen shriek 'Yes love, yes, Edith, yes,'
Shrill, till the comrade of his chambers woke,
And came upon him half-arisen from sleep,
With a weird bright eye, sweating and trembling,
His hair as it were crackling into flames,
His body half flung forward in pursuit,
And his long arms stretch'd as to grasp a flyer:
Nor knew he wherefore he had made the cry;
And being much befool'd and idioted
By the rough amity of the other, sank
As into sleep again. The second day,
My lady's Indian kinsman rushing in,
A breaker of the bitter news from home,
Found a dead man, a letter edged with death
Beside him, and the dagger which himself
Gave Edith, redden'd with no bandit's blood:
'From Edith' was engraven on the blade.

Then Averill went and gazed upon his death.
And when he came again, his flock believed—
Beholding how the years which are not Time's
Had blasted him—that many thousand days
Were clipt by horror from his term of life.
Yet the sad mother, for the second death
Scarce touch'd her thro' that nearness of the first,
And being used to find her pastor texts,
Sent to the harrow'd brother, praying him
To speak before the people of her child,
And fixt the Sabbath. Darkly that day rose:
Autumn's mock sunshine of the faded woods
Was all the life of it; for hard on these,
A breathless burthen of low-folded heavens
Stifled and chill'd at once; but every roof
Sent out a listener: many too had known
Edith among the hamlets round, and since
The parents' harshness and the hapless loves
And double death were widely murmur'd, left
Their own gray tower, or plain-faced tabernacle,
To hear him; all in mourning these, and those
With blots of it about them, ribbon, glove
Or kerchief; while the church,—one night, except
For greenish glimmerings thro' the lancets,—made
Still paler the pale head of him, who tower'd
Above them, with his hopes in either grave.

Long o'er his bent brows linger'd Averill,
His face magnetic to the hand from which
Livid he pluck'd it forth, and labor'd thro'
His brief prayer-prelude, gave the verse 'Behold,

Your house is left unto you desolate!'
But lapsed into so long a pause again
As half amazed half frighted all his flock:
Then from his height and loneliness of grief
Bore down in flood, and dash'd his angry heart
Against the desolations of the world.

Never since our bad earth became one sea,
Which rolling o'er the palaces of the proud,
And all but those who knew the living God—
Eight that were left to make a purer world—
When since had flood, fire, earthquake, thunder, wrought
Such waste and havoc as the idolatries,
Which from the low light of mortality
Shot up their shadows to the Heaven of Heavens,
And worshipt their own darkness in the Highest?
'Gash thyself, priest, and honor thy brute Baäl,
And to thy worst self sacrifice thyself,
For with thy worst self hast thou clothed thy God.
Then came a Lord in no wise like to Baäl.
The babe shall lead the lion. Surely now
The wilderness shall blossom as the rose.
Crown thyself, worm, and worship thine own lusts!—
No coarse and blockish God of acreage
Stands at thy gate for thee to grovel to—
Thy God is far diffused in noble groves
And princely halls, and farms, and flowing lawns,
And heaps of living gold that daily grow,
And title-scrolls and gorgeous heraldries.
In such a shape dost thou behold thy God.
Thou wilt not gash thy flesh for *him;* for thine
Fares richly, in fine linen, not a hair
Ruffled upon the scarfskin, even while
The deathless ruler of thy dying house
Is wounded to the death that cannot die;
And tho' thou numberest with the followers
Of One who cried, "Leave all and follow me."
Thee therefore with His light about thy feet,
Thee with His message ringing in thine ears,
Thee shall thy brother man, the Lord from Heaven,
Born of a village girl, carpenter's son,
Wonderful, Prince of peace, the Mighty God,
Count the more base idolater of the two;
Crueller: as not passing thro' the fire
Bodies, but souls—thy children's—thro' the smoke.
The blight of low desires—darkening thine own
To thine own likeness; or if one of these,
Thy better born unhappily from thee,
Should, as by miracle, grow straight and fair—
Friends, I was bid to speak of such a one
By those who most have cause to sorrow for her—
Fairer than Rachel by the palmy well,
Fairer than Ruth among the fields of corn,
Fair as the Angel that said "Hail!" she seem'd,
Who entering fill'd the house with sudden light.
For so mine own was brighten'd: where indeed
The roof so lowly but that beam of Heaven

Dawn'd sometime thro' the doorway? whose the babe
Too ragged to be fondled on her lap,
Warm'd at her bosom? The poor child of shame
The common care whom no one cared for, leapt
To greet her, wasting his forgotten heart,
As with the mother he had never known,
In gambols; for her fresh and innocent eyes
Had such a star of morning in their blue,
That all neglected places of the field
Broke into nature's music when they saw her.
Low was her voice, but won mysterious way
Thro' the seal'd ear to which a louder one
Was all but silence—free of alms her hand—
The hand that robed your cottage-walls with flowers
Has often toil'd to clothe your little ones;
How often placed upon the sick man's brow
Cool'd it, or laid his feverous pillow smooth!
Had you one sorrow and she shared it not?
One burthen and she would not lighten it?
One spiritual doubt she did not soothe?
Or when some heat of difference sparkled out,
How sweetly would she glide between your wraths,
And steal you from each other! for she walk'd
Wearing the light yoke of that Lord of love,
Who still'd the rolling wave of Galilee!
And one—of him I was not bid to speak—
Was always with her, whom you also knew.
Him too you loved, for he was worthy love.
And these had been together from the first;
They might have been together till the last.
Friends, this frail bark of ours, when sorely tried
May wreck itself without the pilot's guilt,
Without the captain's knowledge: hope with me.
Whose shame is that, if he went hence with shame?
Nor mine the fault, if losing both of these
I cry to vacant chairs and widow'd walls,
"My house is left unto me desolate."'

While thus he spoke, his hearers wept; but some,
Sons of the glebe, with other frowns than those
That knit themselves for summer shadow, scowl'd
At their great lord. He, when it seem'd he saw
No pale sheet-lightnings from afar, but fork'd
Of the near storm, and aiming at his head,
Sat anger-charm'd from sorrow, soldier-like,
Erect: but when the preacher's cadence flow'd
Softening thro' all the gentle attributes
Of his lost child, the wife, who watch'd his face,
Paled at a sudden twitch of his iron mouth;
And 'O pray God that he hold up' she thought
'Or surely I shall shame myself and him.'

'Nor yours the blame—for who beside your hearths
Can take her place—if echoing me you cry
"Our house is left unto us desolate?"

But thou, O thou that killest, hadst thou known,
O thou that stonest, hadst thou understood
The things belonging to thy peace and ours!
Is there no prophet but the voice that calls
Doom upon kings, or in the waste "Repent"?
Is not our own child on the narrow way,
Who down to those that saunter in the broad
Cries "Come up hither," as a prophet to us?
Is there no stoning save with flint and rock?
Yes, as the dead we weep for testify—
No desolation but by sword and fire?
Yes, as your moanings witness, and myself
Am lonelier, darker, earthlier for my loss.
Give me your prayers, for he is past your prayers,
Not past the living fount of pity in Heaven.
But I that thought myself long-suffering, meek,
Exceeding "poor in spirit"—how the words
Have twisted back upon themselves, and mean
Vileness, we are grown so proud—I wish'd my voice
A rushing tempest of the wrath of God
To blow these sacrifices thro' the world—
Sent like the twelve-divided concubine
To inflame the tribes: but there—out yonder—earth
Lightens from her own central Hell—O there
The red fruit of an old idolatry—
The heads of chiefs and princes fall so fast,
They cling together in the ghastly sack—
The land all shambles—naked marriages
Flash from the bridge, and ever-murder'd France,
By shores that darken with the gathering wolf,
Runs in a river of blood to the sick sea.
Is this a time to madden madness then?
Was this a time for these to flaunt their pride?
May Pharaoh's darkness, folds as dense as those
Which hid the Holiest from the people's eyes
Ere the great death, shroud this great sin from all!
Doubtless our narrow world must canvass it:
O rather pray for those and pity them,
Who, thro' their own desire accomplish'd, bring
Their own gray hairs with sorrow to the grave—
Who broke the bond which they desired to break,
Which else had link'd their race with times to come—
Who wove coarse webs to snare her purity,
Grossly contriving their dear daughter's good—
Poor souls, and knew not what they did, but sat
Ignorant, devising their own daughter's death!
May not that earthly chastisement suffice?
Have not our love and reverence left them bare?
Will not another take their heritage?
Will there be children's laughter in their hall
For ever and for ever, or one stone
Left on another, or is it a light thing
That I, their guest, their host, their ancient friend,
I made by these the last of all my race,
Must cry to these the last of theirs, as cried

Christ ere His agony to those that swore
Not by the temple but the gold, and made
Their own traditions God, and slew the Lord,
And left their memories a world's curse—"Behold,
Your house is left unto you desolate"?'

Ended he had not, but she brook'd no more:
Long since her heart had beat remorselessly,
Her crampt-up sorrow pain'd her, and a sense
Of meanness in her unresisting life.
Then their eyes vext her; for on entering
He had cast the curtains of their seat aside—
Black velvet of the costliest—she herself
Had seen to that: fain had she closed them now,
Yet dared not stir to do it, only near'd
Her husband inch by inch, but when she laid,
Wifelike, her hand in one of his, he veil'd
His face with the other, and at once, as falls
A creeper when the prop is broken, fell
The woman shrieking at his feet, and swoon'd.
Then her own people bore along the nave
Her pendent hands, and narrow meagre face
Seam'd with the shallow cares of fifty years:
And her the Lord of all the landscape round
Ev'n to its last horizon, and of all
Who peer'd at him so keenly, follow'd out
Tall and erect, but in the middle aisle
Reel'd, as a footsore ox in crowded ways
Stumbling across the market to his death,
Unpitied; for he groped as blind, and seem'd
Always about to fall, grasping the pews
And oaken finials till he touch'd the door;
Yet to the lychgate, where his chariot stood,
Strode from the porch, tall and erect again.

But nevermore did either pass the gate
Save under pall with bearers. In one month,
Thro' weary and yet ever wearier hours,
The childless mother went to seek her child;
And when he felt the silence of his house
About him, and the change and not the change,
And those fixt eyes of painted ancestors
Staring for ever from their gilded walls
On him their last descendant, his own head
Began to droop, to fall; the man became
Imbecile; his one word was 'desolate;'
Dead for two years before his death was he;
But when the second Christmas came, escaped
His keepers, and the silence which he felt,
To find a deeper in the narrow gloom
By wife and child; nor wanted at his end
The dark retinue reverencing death
At golden thresholds; nor from tender hearts,
And those who sorrow'd o'er a vanish'd race,
Pity, the violet on the tyrant's grave.
Then the great Hall was wholly broken down,
And the broad woodland parcell'd into farms;

And where the two contrived their daughter's good,
Lies the hawk's cast, the mole has made his run,
The hedgehog underneath the plantain bores,
The rabbit fondles his own harmless face,
The slow-worm creeps, and the thin weasel there
Follows the mouse, and all is open field.

SEA DREAMS.

A CITY clerk, but gently born and bred;
His wife, an unknown artist's orphan child—
One babe was theirs, a Margaret, three years old:
They, thinking that her clear germander eye
Droopt in the giant-factoried city-gloom,
Came, with a month's leave given them, to the sea:
For which his gains were dock'd, however small:
Small were his gains, and hard his work; besides,
Their slender household fortunes (for the man
Had risk'd his little) like the little thrift,
Trembled in perilous places o'er a deep:
And oft, when sitting all alone, his face
Would darken, as he cursed his credulousness,
And that one unctuous mouth which lured him, rogue,
To buy strange shares in some Peruvian mine.
Now seaward-bound for health they gain'd a coast,
All sand and cliff and deep-inrunning cave,
At close of day; slept, woke, and went the next,
The Sabbath, pious variers from the church,
To chapel; where a heated pulpiteer,
Not preaching simple Christ to simple men,
Announced the coming doom, and fulminated
Against the scarlet woman and her creed;
For sideways up he swung his arms, and shriek'd
'Thus, thus with violence,' ev'n as if he held
The Apocalyptic millstone, and himself
Were that great Angel; 'Thus with violence
Shall Babylon be cast into the sea;
Then comes the close.' The gentle-hearted wife
Sat shuddering at the ruin of a world;
He at his own: but when the wordy storm
Had ended, forth they came and paced the shore,
Ran in and out the long sea-framing caves,
Drank the large air, and saw, but scarce believed
(The sootflake of so many a summer still
Clung to their fancies) that they saw, the sea.
So now on sand they walk'd, and now on cliff,
Lingering about the thymy promontories,
Till all the sails were darken'd in the west,
And rosed in the east: then homeward and to bed:
Where she, who kept a tender Christian hope,
Haunting a holy text, and still to that
Returning, as the bird returns, at night,
'Let not the sun go down upon your wrath,'
Said, 'Love, forgive him:' but he did not speak;
And silenced by that silence lay the wife,

Remembering her dear Lord who died for all,
And musing on the little lives of men,
And how they mar this little by their feuds.

But while the two were sleeping, a full tide
Rose with ground-swell, which, on the foremost rocks
Touching, upjetted in spirts of wild sea-smoke,
And scaled in sheets of wasteful foam, and fell
In vast sea-cataracts—ever and anon
Dead claps of thunder from within the cliffs
Heard thro' the living roar. At this the babe,
Their Margaret cradled near them, wail'd and woke
The mother, and the father suddenly cried,
'A wreck, a wreck!' then turn'd, and groaning said,

'Forgive! How many will say, "forgive," and find
A sort of absolution in the sound
To hate a little longer! No; the sin
That neither God nor man can well forgive,
Hypocrisy, I saw it in him at once.
Is it so true that second thoughts are best?
Not first, and third, which are a riper first?
Too ripe, too late! they come too late for use.
Ah love, there surely lives in man and beast
Something divine to warn them of their foes:
And such a sense, when first I fronted him,
Said, "Trust him not;" but after, when I came
To know him more, I lost it, knew him less;
Fought with what seem'd my own uncharity;
Sat at his table; drank his costly wines;
Made more and more allowance for his talk;
Went further, fool! and trusted him with all,
All my poor scrapings from a dozen years
Of dust and deskwork: there is no such mine,
None; but a gulf of ruin, swallowing gold,
Not making. Ruin'd! ruin'd! the sea roars
Ruin: a fearful night!'

'Not fearful; fair,'
Said the good wife, 'if every star in heaven
Can make it fair: you do but hear the tide.
Had you ill dreams?'

'O yes,' he said, 'I dream'd
Of such a tide swelling toward the land,
And I from out the boundless outer deep
Swept with it to the shore, and enter'd one
Of those dark caves that run beneath the cliffs.
I thought the motion of the boundless deep
Bore thro' the cave, and I was heaved upon it
In darkness: then I saw one lovely star
Larger and larger. "What a world," I thought,
"To live in!" but in moving on I found
Only the landward exit of the cave,
Bright with the sun upon the stream beyond:
And near the light a giant woman sat,
All over earthy, like a piece of earth,
A pickaxe in her hand: then out I slipt
Into a land all sun and blossom, trees
As high as heaven, and every bird that sings
And here the night-light flickering in my eyes
Awoke me.'

'That was then your dream,' she said,
'Not sad, but sweet.'

'So sweet, I lay,' said he,
'And mused upon it, drifting up the stream
In fancy, till I slept again, and pieced
The broken vision; for I dream'd that still
The motion of the great deep bore me on,
And that the woman walk'd upon the brink:
I wonder'd at her strength, and ask'd her of it:
"It came," she said, "by working in the mines:"
O then to ask her of my shares, I thought;
And ask'd; but not a word; she shook her head.
And then the motion of the current ceased,
And there was rolling thunder; and we reach'd
A mountain, like a wall of burs and thorns;
But she with her strong feet up the steep hill
Trod out a path: I follow'd; and at top
She pointed seaward: there a fleet of glass,
That seem'd a fleet of jewels under me,
Sailing along before a gloomy cloud
That not one moment ceased to thunder, past
In sunshine; right across its track there lay,
Down in the water, a long reef of gold,
Or what seem'd gold: and I was glad at first
To think that in our often-ransack'd world
Still so much gold was left; and then I fear'd
Lest the gay navy there should splinter on it,
And fearing waved my arm to warn them off;
An idle signal, for the brittle fleet
(I thought I could have died to save it) near'd,
Touch'd, clink'd, and clash'd, and vanish'd, and I woke,
I heard the clash so clearly. Now I see
My dream was Life; the woman honest Work;
And my poor venture but a fleet of glass
Wreck'd on a reef of visionary gold.'

'Nay,' said the kindly wife to comfort him,
'You raised your arm, you tumbled down and broke
The glass with little Margaret's medicine in it;
And, breaking that, you made and broke your dream:
A trifle makes a dream, a trifle breaks.'

'No trifle,' groan'd the husband; 'yesterday
I met him suddenly in the street, and ask'd
That which I ask'd the woman in my dream.
Like her, he shook his head. "Show me the books!"
He dodged me with a long and loose account.
"The books, the books!" but he, he could not wait,
Bound on a matter he of life and death:
When the great Books (see Daniel seven and ten)
Were open'd, I should find he meant me well;
And then began to bloat himself, and ooze
All over with the fat affectionate smile
That makes the widow lean. "My dearest friend,
Have faith, have faith! We live by faith," said he;
"And all things work together for the good
Of those"—it makes me sick to quote him—last

Gript my hand hard, and with God-bless-you went.
I stood like one that had received a blow:
I found a hard friend in his loose accounts,
A loose one in the hard grip of his hand,
A curse in his God-bless-you: then my eyes
Pursued him down the street, and far away,
Among the honest shoulders of the crowd,
Read rascal in the motions of his back,
And scoundrel in the supple-sliding knee.'

'Was he so bound, poor soul?' said the good wife;
'So are we all: but do not call him, love,
Before you prove him, rogue, and proved, forgive.
His gain is loss; for he that wrongs his friend
Wrongs himself more, and ever bears about
A silent court of justice in his breast,
Himself the judge and jury, and himself
The prisoner at the bar, ever condemn'd:
And that drags down his life: then comes what comes
Hereafter: and be meant, he said he meant,
Perhaps he meant, or partly meant, you well.'

'"With all his conscience and one eye askew"—
Love, let me quote these lines, that you may learn
A man is likewise counsel for himself,
Too often, in that silent court of yours—
"With all his conscience and one eye askew,
So false, he partly took himself for true;
Whose pious talk, when most his heart was dry,
Made wet the crafty crowsfoot round his eye;
Who, never naming God except for gain,
So never took that useful name in vain,
Made Him his catspaw and the Cross his tool,
And Christ the bait to trap his dupe and fool;
Nor deeds of gift, but gifts of grace he forged,
And snake-like slimed his victim ere he gorged;
And oft at Bible meetings, o'er the rest
Arising, did his holy oily best,
Dropping the too rough H in Hell and Heaven,
To spread the Word by which himself had thriven."
How like you this old satire?'

'Nay,' she said,
'I loathe it: he had never kindly heart,
Nor ever cared to better his own kind,
Who first wrote satire, with no pity in it.
But will you hear *my* dream, for I had one
That altogether went to music? Still
It awed me.'

Then she told it, having dream'd
Of that same coast.

—But round the North, a light,
A belt, it seem'd, of luminous vapor, lay,
And ever in it a low musical note
Swell'd up and died; and, as it swell'd, a ridge
Of breaker issued from the belt, and still
Grew with the growing note, and when the note
Had reach'd a thunderous fulness, on those cliffs

Broke, mixt with awful light (the same as that
Living within the belt) whereby she saw
That all those lines of cliffs were cliffs no more,
But huge cathedral fronts of every age,
Grave, florid, stern, as far as eye could see,
One after one: and then the great ridge drew,
Lessening to the lessening music, back,
And past into the belt and swell'd again
Slowly to music: ever when it broke
The statues, king or saint, or founder fell;
Then from the gaps and chasms of ruin left
Came men and women in dark clusters round,
Some crying, 'Set them up! they shall not fall!'
And others, 'Let them lie, for they have fall'n.'
And still they strove and wrangled: and she grieved
In her strange dream, she knew not why, to find
Their wildest wailings never out of tune
With that sweet note; and ever as their shrieks
Ran highest up the gamut, that great wave
Returning, while none mark'd it, on the crowd
Broke, mixt with awful light, and show'd their eyes
Glaring, and passionate looks, and swept away
The men of flesh and blood, and men of stone,
To the waste deeps together.

'Then I fixt
My wistful eyes on two fair images,
Both crown'd with stars and high among the stars,—
The Virgin Mother standing with her child
High up on one of those dark minster-fronts—
Till she began to totter, and the child
Clung to the mother, and sent out a cry
Which mixt with little Margaret's, and I woke,
And my dream awed me:—well—but what are dreams?
Yours came but from the breaking of a glass,
And mine but from the crying of a child.'

'Child? No!' said he, 'but this tide's roar, and his,
Our Boanerges with his threats of doom,
And loud-lung'd Antibabylonianisms
(Altho' I grant but little music there)
Went both to make your dream: but if there were
A music harmonizing our wild cries,
Sphere-music such as that you dream'd about,
Why, that would make our passions far too like
The discords dear to the musician. No—
One shriek of hate would jar all the hymns of heaven:
True Devils with no ear, they howl in tune
With nothing but the Devil!'

'"True" indeed!
One of our town, but later by an hour
Here than ourselves, spoke with me on the shore;
While you were running down the sands, and made
The dimpled flounce of the sea-furbelow flap,
Good man, to please the child. She brought strange news.
Why were you silent when I spoke to-night?
I had set my heart on your forgiving him
Before you knew. We *must* forgive the dead.'

'Dead! who is dead?'

'The man your eye pursued.
A little after you had parted with him,
He suddenly dropt dead of heart-disease.'

'Dead? he? of heart-disease? what heart had he
To die of? dead!'

'Ah, dearest, if there be
A devil in man, there is an angel too,
And if he did that wrong you charge him with,
His angel broke his heart. But your rough voice
(You spoke so loud) has roused the child again.
Sleep, little birdie, sleep! will she not sleep
Without her "little birdie"? well then, sleep,
And I will sing you "birdie."'

Saying this,
The woman half turn'd round from him she loved,
Left him one hand, and reaching thro' the night
Her other, found (for it was close beside)
And half-embraced the basket cradle-head
With one soft arm, which, like the pliant bough
That moving moves the nest and nestling, sway'd
The cradle, while she sang this baby song

What does little birdie say
In her nest at peep of day?
Let me fly, says little birdie,
Mother, let me fly away.
Birdie, rest a little longer,
Till the little wings are stronger.
So she rests a little longer,
Then she flies away.

What does little baby say,
In her bed at peep of day?
Baby says, like little birdie,
Let me rise and fly away.

Baby, sleep a little longer,
Till the little limbs are stronger.
If she sleeps a little longer,
Baby too shall fly away.

'She sleeps: let us too, let all evil, sleep.
He also sleeps—another sleep than ours.
He can do no more wrong: forgive him, dear,
And I shall sleep the sounder!'

Then the man,
'His deeds yet live, the worst is yet to come.
Yet let your sleep for this one night be sound:
I do forgive him!'

'Thanks, my love,' she said,
'Your own will be the sweeter,' and they slept.

LUCRETIUS.

LUCILIA, wedded to Lucretius, found
Her master cold; for when the morning flush
Of passion and the first embrace had died
Between them, tho' he lov'd her none the less,
Yet often when the woman heard his foot
Return from pacings in the field, and ran
To greet him with a kiss, the master took
Small notice, or austerely, for—his mind
Half buried in some weightier argument,
Or fancy-borne perhaps upon the rise
And long roll of the Hexameter—he past
To turn and ponder those three hundred scrolls
Left by the Teacher, whom he held divine.
She brook'd it not; but wrathful, petulant,

"O PLUMP HEAD-WAITER AT THE COCK."—*Page 92*

Dreaming some rival, sought and found a witch
Who brew'd the philtre which had power, they said,
To lead an errant passion home again.
And this, at times, she mingled with his drink,
And this destroy'd him; for the wicked broth
Confused the chemic labor of the blood,
And tickling the brute brain within the man's
Made havoc among those tender cells, and check'd
His power to shape: he loathed himself; and once
After a tempest woke upon a morn
That mock'd him with returning calm, and cried:

'Storm in the night! for thrice I heard the rain
Rushing; and once the flash of a thunderbolt—
Methought I never saw so fierce a fork—
Struck out the streaming mountain-side, and show'd
A riotous confluence of watercourses
Blanching and billowing in a hollow of it,
Where all but yester-eve was dusty-dry.

'Storm, and what dreams, ye holy Gods, what dreams!
For thrice I waken'd after dreams. Perchance
We do but recollect the dreams that come
Just ere the waking: terrible! for it seem'd
A void was made in Nature; all her bonds
Crack'd; and I saw the flaring atom-streams
And torrents of her myriad universe,
Ruining along the illimitable inane,
Fly on to clash together again, and make
Another and another frame of things
For ever: that was mine, my dream, I knew it—
Of and belonging to me, as the dog
With inward yelp and restless forefoot plies
His function of the woodland: but the next!
I thought that all the blood by Sylla shed
Came driving rainlike down again on earth,
And where it dash'd the reddening meadow, sprang
No dragon warriors from Cadmean teeth,
For these I thought my dream would show to me,
But girls, Hetairai, curious in their art,
Hired animalisms, vile as those that made
The mulberry-faced Dictator's orgies worse
Than aught they fable of the quiet Gods.
And hands they mixt, and yell'd and round me drove
In narrowing circles till I yell'd again
Half-suffocated, and sprang up, and saw—
Was it the first beam of my latest day?

'Then, then, from utter gloom stood out the breasts,
The breasts of Helen, and hoveringly a sword
Now over and now under, now direct,
Pointed itself to pierce, but sank down shamed
At all that beauty; and as I stared, a fire,
The fire that left a roofless Ilion,
Shot out of them, and scorch'd me that I woke.

'Is this thy vengeance, holy Venus, thine,
Because I would not one of thine own doves,
Not ev'n a rose, were offer'd to thee? thine,

Forgetful how my rich proœmion makes
Thy glory fly along the Italian field,
In lays that will outlast thy Deity?

'Deity? nay, thy worshippers. My tongue
Trips, or I speak profanely. Which of these
Angers thee most, or angers thee at all?
Not if thou be'st of those who, far aloof
From envy, hate and pity, and spite and scorn,
Live the great life which all our greatest fain
Would follow, center'd in eternal calm.

'Nay, if thou canst, O Goddess, like ourselves
Touch, and be touch'd, then would I cry to thee
To kiss thy Mavors, roll thy tender arms
Round him, and keep him from the lust of blood
That makes a steaming slaughter-house of Rome.

'Ay, but I meant not thee; I meant not her,
Whom all the pines of Ida shook to see
Slide from that quiet heaven of hers, and tempt
The Trojan, while his neat-herds were abroad;
Nor her that o'er her wounded hunter wept
Her Deity false in human-amorous tears;
Nor whom her beardless apple-arbiter,
Decided fairest. Rather, O ye Gods,
Poet-like, as the great Sicilian called
Calliope to grace his golden verse—
Ay, and this Kypris also—did I take
That popular name of thine to shadow forth
The all-generating powers and genial heat
Of Nature, when she strikes thro' the thick blood
Of cattle, and light is large, and lambs are glad
Nosing the mother's udder, and the bird
Makes his heart voice amid the blaze of flowers:
Which things appear the work of mighty Gods.

'The Gods! and if I go *my* work is left
Unfinish'd—*if* I go. The Gods, who haunt
The lucid interspace of world and world,
Where never creeps a cloud, or moves a wind,
Nor ever falls the least white star of snow,
Nor ever lowest roll of thunder moans,
Nor sound of human sorrow mounts to mar
Their sacred everlasting calm! and such,
Not all so fine, nor so divine a calm,
Not such, nor all unlike it, man may gain
Letting his own life go. The Gods, the Gods!
If all be atoms, how then should the Gods
Being atomic not be dissoluble,
Not follow the great law? My master held
That Gods there are, for all men so believe.
I prest my footsteps into his, and meant
Surely to lead my Memmius in a train
Of flowery clauses onward to the proof
That Gods there are, and deathless. Meant? I meant?
I have forgotten what I meant: my mind
Stumbles, and all my faculties are lamed.

'Look where another of our Gods, the Sun,
Apollo, Delius, or of older use
All-seeing Hyperion—what you will—
Has mounted yonder; since he never sware,

Except his wrath were wreak'd on wretched man,
That he would only shine among the dead
Hereafter; tales! for never yet on earth
Could dead flesh creep, or bits of roasting ox
Moan round the spit—nor knows he what he sees;
King of the East altho' he seem, and girt
With song and flame and fragrance, slowly lifts
His golden feet on those empurpled stairs
That climb into the windy halls of heaven:
And here he glances on an eye new-born,
And gets for greeting but a wail of pain;
And here he stays upon a freezing orb
That fain would gaze upon him to the last;
And here upon a yellow eyelid fall'n
And closed by those who mourn a friend in vain,
Not thankful that his troubles are no more.
And me, altho' his fire is on my face
Blinding, he sees not, nor at all can tell
Whether I mean this day to end myself,
Or lend an ear to Plato where he says,
That men like soldiers may not quit the post
Allotted by the Gods: but he that holds
The Gods are careless, wherefore need he care
Greatly for them, nor rather plunge at once,
Being troubled, wholly out of sight, and sink
Past earthquake—ay, and gout and stone, that break
Body toward death, and palsy, death-in-life,
And wretched age—and worst disease of all,
These prodigies of myriad nakednesses,
And twisted shapes of lust, unspeakable,
Abominable, strangers at my hearth
Not welcome, harpies miring every dish,
The phantom husks of something foully done,
And fleeting thro' the boundless universe,
And blasting the long quiet of my breast
With animal heat and dire insanity?

'How should the mind, except it loved them, clasp
These idols to herself? or do they fly
Now thinner, and now thicker, like the flakes
In a fall of snow, and so press in, perforce
Of multitude, as crowds that in an hour
Of civic tumult jam the doors, and bear
The keepers down, and throng, their rags and they
The basest, far into that council-hall
Where sit the best and stateliest of the land?

'Can I not fling this horror off me again,
Seeing with how great ease Nature can smile,
Balmier and nobler from her bath of storm,
At random ravage? and how easily
The mountain there has cast his cloudy slough,
Now towering o'er him in serenest air,
A mountain o'er a mountain,—ay, and within
All hollow as the hopes and fears of men?

'But who was he, that in the garden snared
Picus and Faunus, rustic Gods? a tale

To laugh at—more to laugh at in myself—
For look! what is it? there? yon arbutus
Totters; a noiseless riot underneath
Strikes through the wood, sets all the tops quivering—
The mountain quickens into Nymph and Faun;
And here an Oread—how the sun delights
To glance and shift about her slippery sides,
And rosy knees and supple roundedness,
And budded bosom-peaks—who this way runs
Before the rest—A satyr, a satyr, see,
Follows; but him I proved impossible;
Twy-natured is no nature: yet he draws
Nearer and nearer, and I scan him now
Beastlier than any phantom of his kind
That ever butted his rough brother-brute
For lust or lusty blood or provender:
I hate, abhor, spit, sicken at him; and she
Loathes him as well; such a precipitate heel,
Fledged as it were with Mercury's ankle-wing,
Whirls her to me: but will she fling herself,
Shameless upon me? Catch her, goat-foot: nay,
Hide, hide them, million-myrtled wilderness,
And cavern-shadowing laurels, hide! do I wish—
What?—that the bush were leafless? or to whelm
All of them in one massacre? O ye Gods,
I know you careless, yet, behold, to you
From childly wont and ancient use I call—
I thought I lived securely as yourselves—
No lewdness, narrowing envy, monkey-spite,
No madness of ambition, avarice, none:
No larger feast than under plane or pine
With neighbors laid along the grass, to take
Only such cups as left us friendly-warm,
Affirming each his own philosophy—
Nothing to mar the sober majesties
Of settled, sweet, Epicurean life.
But now it seems some unseen monster lays
His vast and filthy hands upon my will,
Wrenching it backward into his; and spoils
My bliss in being; and it was not great;
For save when shutting reasons up in rhythm,
Or Heliconian honey in living words,
To make a truth less harsh, I often grew
Tired of so much within our little life,
Or of so little in our little life—
Poor little life that toddles half an hour
Crown'd with a flower or two, and there an end—
And since the nobler pleasure seems to fade,
Why should I, beastlike as I find myself,
Not manlike end myself?—our privilege—
What beast has heart to do it? And what man,
What Roman would be dragg'd in triumph thus?
Not I; not he, who bears one name with her
Whose death-blow struck the dateless doom of kings,
When, brooking not the Tarquin in her veins,
She made her blood in sight of Collatine
And all his peers, flushing the guiltless air,

Spout from the maiden fountain in her heart.
And from it sprang the Commonwealth, which breaks
As I am breaking now!

'And therefore now
Let her, that is the womb and tomb of all,
Great Nature, take, and forcing far apart
Those blind beginnings that have made me man,
Dash them anew together at her will
Thro' all her cycles—into man once more,
Or beast or bird or fish, or opulent flower:
But till this cosmic order everywhere
Shatter'd into one earthquake in one day
Cracks all to pieces,—and that hour perhaps
Is not so far when momentary man
Shall seem no more a something to himself,
But he, his hopes and hates, his homes and fanes,
And even his bones long laid within the grave,
The very sides of the grave itself shall pass,
Vanishing, atom and void, atom and void,
Into the unseen for ever,—till that hour,
My golden work in which I told a truth
That stays the rolling Ixionian wheel,
And numbs the Fury's ringlet-snake, and plucks
The mortal soul from out immortal hell,
Shall stand: ay, surely: then it fails at last
And perishes as I must; for O Thou,
Passionless bride, divine Tranquillity,
Yearn'd after by the wisest of the wise,
Who fail to find thee, being as thou art
Without one pleasure and without one pain,
Howbeit I know thou surely must be mine
Or soon or late, yet out of season, thus
I woo thee roughly, for thou carest not
How roughly men may woo thee so they win—
Thus—thus: the soul flies out and dies in the air.'

With that he drove the knife into his side:
She heard him raging, heard him fall; ran in,
Beat breast, tore hair, cried out upon herself
As having fail'd in duty to him, shriek'd
That she but meant to win him back, fell on him,
Clasp'd, kiss'd him, wail'd: he answer'd, 'Care not thou!
Thy duty? What is duty? Fare thee well!'

MAUD; A MONODRAMA.

PART I.

I.

1.

I HATE the dreadful hollow behind the little wood,
Its lips in the field above are dabbled with blood-red heath,
The red-ribb'd ledges drip with a silent horror of blood,
And Echo there, whatever is ask'd her, answers 'Death.'

II.

For there in the ghastly pit long since a body was found,
His who had given me life—O father! O God! was it well?—
Mangled, and flatten'd, and crush'd, and dinted into the ground:
There yet lies the rock that fell with him when he fell.

III.

Did he fling himself down? who knows? for a vast speculation had fail'd,
And ever he mutter'd and madden'd, and ever wann'd with despair,
And out he walk'd when the wind like a broken worldling wail'd,
And the flying gold of the ruin'd woodlands drove thro' the air.

IV.

I remember the time, for the roots of my hair were stirr'd
By a shuffled step, by a dead weight trail'd, by a whisper'd fright,
And my pulses closed their gates with a shock on my heart as I heard
The shrill-edged shriek of a mother divide the shuddering night.

V.

Villainy somewhere! whose? One says, we are villains all.
Not he: his honest fame should at least by me be maintained:
But that old man, now lord of the broad estate and the Hall,
Dropt off gorged from a scheme that had left us flaccid and drain'd.

VI.

Why do they prate of the blessings of Peace? we have made them a curse,
Pickpockets, each hand lusting for all that is not its own;
And lust of gain, in the spirit of Cain, is it better or worse
Than the heart of the citizen hissing in war on his own hearthstone?

VII.

But these are the days of advance, the works of the men of mind,
When who but a fool would have faith in a tradesman's ware or his word?
Is it peace or war? Civil war, as I think, and that of a kind
The viler, as underhand, not openly bearing the sword.

VIII.

Sooner or later I too may passively take the print
Of the golden age—why not? I have neither hope nor trust;
May make my heart as a millstone, set my face as a flint,
Cheat and be cheated, and die: who knows? we are ashes and dust.

IX.

Peace sitting under her olive, and slurring the days gone by,
When the poor are hovell'd and hustled together, each sex, like swine,
When only the ledger lives, and when only not all men lie;
Peace in her vineyard—yes!—but a company forges the wine.

X.

And the vitriol madness flushes up in the ruffian's head,
Till the filthy by-lane rings to the yell of the trampled wife,
And chalk and alum and plaster are sold to the poor for bread,
And the spirit of murder works in the very means of life,

XI.

And Sleep must lie down arm'd, for the villainous centre-bits
Grind on the wakeful ear in the hush of the moonless nights,
While another is cheating the sick of a few last gasps, as he sits
To pestle a poison'd poison behind his crimson lights.

XII.

When a Mammonite mother kills her babe for a burial fee,
And Timour-Mammon grins on a pile of children's bones,
Is it peace or war? better, war! loud war by land and by sea,
War with a thousand battles, and shaking a hundred thrones.

XIII.

For I trust if an enemy's fleet came yonder round by the hill,
And the rushing battle-bolt sang from the three-decker out of the foam,
That the smooth-faced snubnosed rogue would leap from his counter and till,
And strike, if he could, were it but with his cheating yardwand, home.—

XIV.

What! am I raging alone as my father raged in his mood?
Must *I* too creep to the hollow and dash myself down and die
Rather than hold by the law that I made, nevermore to brood
On a horror of shatter'd limbs and a wretched swindler's lie?

XV.

Would there be sorrow for *me?* there was *love* in the passionate shriek,
Love for the silent thing that had made false haste to the grave—
Wrapt in a cloak, as I saw him, and thought he would rise and speak
And rave at the lie and the liar, ah God, as he used to rave.

XVI.

I am sick of the Hall and the hill, I am sick of the moor and the main.
Why should I stay? can a sweeter chance ever come to me here?
O, having the nerves of motion as well as the nerves of pain,
Were it not wise if I fled from the place and the pit and the fear?

XVII.

Workmen up at the Hall!—they are coming back from abroad;
The dark old place will be gilt by the touch of a millionaire:
I have heard, I know not whence, of the singular beauty of Maud;
I play'd with the girl when a child; she promised then to be fair.

XVIII.

Maud with her venturous climbings and tumbles and childish escapes,
Maud the delight of the village, the ringing joy of the Hall,
Maud with her sweet purse-mouth when my father dangled the grapes,
Maud the beloved of my mother, the moon-faced darling of all,—

XIX.

What is she now? My dreams are bad. She may bring me a curse.
No, there is fatter game on the moor; she will let me alone.
Thanks, for the fiend best knows whether woman or man be the worse.
I will bury myself in myself, and the Devil may pipe to his own.

II.

Long have I sigh'd for a calm: God grant I may find it at last!
It will never be broken by Maud, she has neither savor nor salt,
But a cold and clear-cut face, as I found when her carriage past,
Perfectly beautiful: let it be granted her: where is the fault?
All that I saw (for her eyes were downcast, not to be seen)
Faultily faultless, icily regular, splendidly null,
Dead perfection, no more; nothing more, if it had not been
For a chance of travel, a paleness, an hour's defect of the rose,
Or an underlip, you may call it a little too ripe, too full,
Or the least little delicate aquiline curve in a sensitive nose,
From which I escaped heart-free, with the least little touch of spleen.

III.

Cold and clear-cut face, why come you so cruelly meek,
Breaking a slumber in which all spleenful folly was drown'd,
Pale with the golden beam of an eyelash dead on the cheek,
Passionless, pale, cold face, star-sweet on a gloom profound;
Womanlike, taking revenge too deep for a transient wrong
Done but in thought to your beauty, and ever as pale as before
Growing and fading and growing upon me without a sound,
Luminous, gemlike, ghostlike, deathlike, half the night long
Growing and fading and growing, till I could bear it no more,
But arose, and all by myself in my own dark garden ground,
Listening now to the tide in its broad-flung shipwrecking roar,
Now to the scream of a madden'd beach dragg'd down by the wave,
Walk'd in a wintry wind by a ghastly glimmer, and found
The shining daffodil dead, and Orion low in his grave.

IV.

I.

A million emeralds break from the ruby-budded lime
In the little grove where I sit—ah, wherefore cannot I be
Like things of the season gay, like the bountiful season bland,
When the far-off sail is blown by the breeze of a softer clime,

Half-lost in the liquid azure bloom of a crescent of sea,
The silent sapphire-spangled marriage ring of the land?

II.

Below me, there, is the village, and looks how quiet and small!
And yet bubbles o'er like a city, with gossip, scandal, and spite;
And Jack on his ale-house bench has as many lies as a Czar;
And here on the landward side, by a red rock, glimmers the Hall;
And up in the high Hall-garden I see her pass like a light;
But sorrow seize me if ever that light be my leading star!

III.

When have I bow'd to her father, the wrinkled head of the race?
I met her to-day with her brother, but not to her brother I bow'd:
I bow'd to his lady-sister as she rode by on the moor;
But the fire of a foolish pride flash'd over her beautiful face.
O child, you wrong your beauty, believe it, in being so proud;
Your father has wealth well-gotten, and I am nameless and poor.

IV.

I keep but a man and a maid, ever ready to slander and steal;
I know it, and smile a hard-set smile, like a stoic, or like
A wiser epicurean, and let the world have its way:
For nature is one with rapine, a harm no preacher can heal;
The Mayfly is torn by the swallow, the sparrow spear'd by the shrike,
And the whole little wood where I sit is a world of plunder and prey.

V.

We are puppets, Man in his pride, and Beauty fair in her flower;
Do we move ourselves, or are moved by an unseen hand at a game
That pushes us off from the board, and others ever succeed?
Ah yet, we cannot be kind to each other here for an hour;
We whisper, and hint, and chuckle, and grin at a brother's shame;
However we brave it out, we men are a little breed.

VI.

A monstrous eft was of old the Lord and Master of Earth,
For him did his high sun flame, and his river billowing ran,
And he felt himself in his force to be Nature's crowning race.
As nine months go to the shaping an infant ripe for his birth,
So many a million of ages have gone to the making of man:
He now is first, but is he the last? is he not too base?

VII.

The man of science himself is fonder of glory, and vain,
An eye well-practised in nature, a spirit bounded and poor;
The passionate heart of the poet is whirl'd into folly and vice.
I would not marvel at either, but keep a temperate brain;
For not to desire or admire, if a man could learn it, were more
Than to walk all day like the sultan of old in a garden of spice.

VIII.

For the drift of the Maker is dark, an Isis hid by the veil.
Who knows the ways of the world, how God will bring them about?
Our planet is one, the suns are many, the world is wide.
Shall I weep if a Poland fall? shall I shriek if a Hungary fail?
Or an infant civilization be ruled with rod or with knout?
I have not made the world, and He that made it will guide.

IX.

Be mine a philosopher's life in the quiet woodland ways,
Where if I cannot be gay let a passionless peace be my lot,
Far-off from the clamor of liars belied in the hubbub of lies;
From the long-neck'd geese of the world that are ever hissing dispraise
Because their natures are little, and, whether he heed it or not,
Where each man walks with his head in a cloud of poisonous flies.

X.

And most of all would I flee from the cruel madness of love,
The honey of poison-flowers and all the measureless ill.
Ah Maud, you milkwhite fawn, you are all unmeet for a wife.
Your mother is mute in her grave as her image in marble above;
Your father is ever in London, you wander about at your will·
You have but fed on the roses and lain in the lilies of life.

V.

I.

A voice by the cedar tree
In the meadow under the Hall!
She is singing an air that is known to me,
A passionate ballad gallant and gay,
A martial song like a trumpet's call!
Singing alone in the morning of life,
In the happy morning of life and of May,
Singing of men that in battle array,
Ready in heart and ready in hand,
March with banner and bugle and fife
To the death, for their native land.

II.

Maud with her exquisite face,
And wild voice pealing up to the sunny sky,
And feet like sunny gems on an English green,
Maud in the light of her youth and her grace,
Singing of Death, and of Honor that cannot die,
Till I well could weep for a time so sordid and mean,
And myself so languid and base.

III.

Silence, beautiful voice!
Be still, for you only trouble the mind
With a joy in which I cannot rejoice,
A glory I shall not find.
Still! I will hear you no more,
For your sweetness hardly leaves me a choice
But to move to the meadow and fall before
Her feet on the meadow grass, and adore,
Not her, who is neither courtly nor kind,
Not her, not her, but a voice.

VI.

I.

Morning arises stormy and pale,
No sun, but a wannish glare

In fold upon fold of hueless cloud,
And the budded peaks of the wood are bow'd
Caught and cuff'd by the gale:
I had fancied it would be fair.

II.

Whom but Maud should I meet
Last night, when the sunset burn'd
On the blossom'd gable-ends
At the head of the village street,
Whom but Maud should I meet?
And she touch'd my hand with a smile so sweet,
She made me divine amends
For a courtesy not return'd.

III.

And thus a delicate spark
Of glowing and growing light
Thro' the livelong hours of the dark
Kept itself warm in the heart of my dreams,
Ready to burst in a color'd flame;
Till at last when the morning came
In a cloud, it faded, and seems
But an ashen-gray delight.

IV.

What if with her sunny hair,
And smile as sunny as cold,
She meant to weave me a snare
Of some coquettish deceit,
Cleopatra-like as of old
To entangle me when we met,
To have her lion roll in a silken net
And fawn at a victor's feet.

V.

Ah, what shall I be at fifty
Should Nature keep me alive,
If I find the world so bitter
When I am but twenty-five?
Yet, if she were not a cheat,
If Maud were all that she seem'd,
And her smile were all that I dream'd,
Then the world were not so bitter
But a smile could make it sweet.

VI.

What if tho' her eye seem'd full
Of a kind intent to me,
What if that dandy-despot, he,
That jewell'd mass of millinery,
That oil'd and curl'd Assyrian Bull
Smelling of musk and of insolence,
Her brother, from whom I keep aloof,
Who wants the finer politic sense
To mask, tho' but in his own behoof,
With a glassy smile his brutal scorn—
What if he had told her yestermorn
How prettily for his own sweet sake
A face of tenderness might be feign'd,
And a moist mirage in desert eyes,
That so, when the rotten hustings shake
In another month to his brazen lies,
A wretched vote may be gain'd.

VII.

For a raven ever croaks, at my side,
Keep watch and ward, keep watch and ward,
Or thou wilt prove their tool.
Yea, too, myself from myself I guard,
For often a man's own angry pride
Is cap and bells for a fool.

VIII.

Perhaps the smile and tender tone
Came out of her pitying womanhood,
For am I not, am I not, here alone
So many a summer since she died,
My mother, who was so gentle and good?
Living alone in an empty house,
Here half-hid in the gleaming wood,
Where I hear the dead at midday moan,
And the shrieking rush of the wainscot mouse,
And my own sad name in corners cried,
When the shiver of dancing leaves is thrown
About its echoing chambers wide,
Till a morbid hate and horror have grown
Of a world in which I have hardly mixt,

And a morbid eating lichen fixt
On a heart half-turn'd to stone.

IX.

O heart of stone, are you flesh, and caught
By that you swore to withstan ?
For what was it else within me wrought
But, I fear, the new strong wine of love,
That made my tongue so stammer and trip
When I saw the treasured splendor, her hand,
Come sliding out of her sacred glove,
And the sunlight broke from her lip ?

X.

I have play'd with her when a child;
She remembers it now we meet.
Ah well, well, well, I *may* be beguiled
By some coquettish deceit.
Yet, if she were not a cheat,
If Maud were all that she seem'd,
And her smile had all that I dream'd,
Then the world were not so bitter
But a smile could make it sweet.

VII.

I.

Did I hear it half in a doze
Long since, I know not where?
Did I dream it an hour ago,
When asleep in this arm-chair ?

II.

Men were drinking together,
Drinking and talking of me;
'Well, if it prove a girl, the boy
Will have plenty: so let it be.'

III.

Is it an echo of something
Read with a boy's delight,
Viziers nodding together
In some Arabian night ?

IV.

Strange, that I hear two men,
Somewhere, talking of me;
'Well, if it prove a girl, my boy
Will have plenty: so let it be.'

VIII.

She came to the village church,
And sat by a pillar alone;
An angel watching an urn
Wept over her, carved in stone;
And once, but once, she lifted her eyes,
And suddenly, sweetly, strangely blush'd
To find they were met by my own;
And suddenly, sweetly, my heart beat stronger
And thicker, until I heard no longer
The snowy-banded, dilettante,
Delicate-handed priest intone;
And thought, is it pride, and mused and sigh'd
'No surely, now it cannot be pride.'

IX.

I was walking a mile,
More than a mile from the shore,
The sun look'd out with a smile
Betwixt the cloud and the moor
And riding at set of day
Over the dark moor land,
Rapidly riding far away,
She waved to me with her hand.
There were two at her side,
Something flash'd in the sun,
Down by the hill I saw them ride,
In a moment they were gone:
Like a sudden spark
Struck vainly in the night,
Then returns the dark
With no more hope of light.

X.

I.

Sick, am I sick of a jealous dread ?
Was not one of the two at her side
This new-made lord, whose splendor plucks
The slavish hat from the villager's head ?
Whose old grandfather has lately died,
Gone to a blacker pit, for whom

Grimy nakedness dragging his trucks
And laying his trams in a poison'd gloom
Wrought, till he crept from a gutted mine
Master of half a servile shire,
And left his coal all turn'd into gold
To a grandson, first of his noble line,
Rich in the grace all women desire,
Strong in the power that all men adore,
And simper and set their voices lower,
And soften as if to a girl, and hold
Awe-stricken breaths at a work divine,
Seeing his gewgaw castle shine,
New as his title, built last year,
There amid perky larches and pine,
And over the sullen-purple moor
(Look at it) pricking a cockney ear.

II.

What, has he found my jewel out?
For one of the two that rode at her side
Bound for the Hall, I am sure was he:
Bound for the Hall, and I think for a bride.
Blithe would her brother's acceptance be.
Maud could be gracious too, no doubt
To a lord, a captain, a padded shape,
A bought commission, a waxen face,
A rabbit mouth that is ever agape—
Bought? what is it he cannot buy?
And therefore splenetic, personal, base,
A wounded thing with a rancorous cry,
At war with myself and a wretched race,
Sick, sick to the heart of life, am I.

III.

Last week came one to the county town,
To preach our poor little army down,
And play the game of the despot kings,
Tho' the state has done it and thrice as well:
This broad-brimm'd hawker of holy things,
Whose ear is cramm'd with his cotton, and rings
Even in dreams to the chink of his pence,
This huckster put down war! can he tell
Whether war be a cause or a consequence?
Put down the passions that make earth Hell!
Down with ambition, avarice, pride,
Jealousy, down! cut off from the mind
The bitter springs of anger and fear;
Down too, down at your own fireside,
With the evil tongue and the evil ear,
For each is at war with mankind.

IV.

I wish I could hear again
The chivalrous battle-song
That she warbled alone in her joy!
I might persuade myself then
She would not do herself this great wrong,
To take a wanton dissolute boy
For a man and leader of men.

V.

Ah God, for a man with heart, head, hand,
Like some of the simple great ones gone
For ever and ever by,
One still strong man in a blatant land,
Whatever they call him, what care I,
Aristocrat, democrat, autocrat—one
Who can rule and dare not lie.

VI.

And ah for a man to arise in me,
That the man I am may cease to be!

XI.

I.

O let the solid ground
Not fail beneath my feet
Before my life has found

What some have found so sweet;
Then let come what come may,
What matter if I go mad,
I shall have had my day.

II.

Let the sweet heavens endure,
Not close and darken above me
Before I am quite quite sure
That there is one to love me;
Then let come what come may
To a life that has been so sad,
I shall have had my day.

XII.

I.

Birds in the high Hall-garden
When twilight was falling,
Maud, Maud, Maud, Maud,
They were crying and calling.

II.

Where was Maud? in our wood;
And I, who else, was with her,
Gathering woodland lilies,
Myriads blow together.

III.

Birds in our wood sang
Ringing thro' the valleys,
Maud is here, here, here
In among the lilies.

IV.

I kiss'd her slender hand,
She took the kiss sedately;
Maud is not seventeen,
But she is tall and stately.

V.

I to cry out on pride
Who have won her favor!
O Maud were sure of Heaven
If lowliness could save her.

VI.

I know the way she went
Home with her maiden posy,
For her feet have touch'd the meadows
And left the daisies rosy.

VII.

Birds in the high Hall-garden
Were crying and calling to her,
Where is Maud, Maud, Maud?
One is come to woo her.

VIII.

Look, a horse at the door,
And little King Charley snarling,
Go back, my lord, across the moor,
You are not her darling.

XIII.

I.

Scorn'd, to be scorn'd by one that I scorn,
Is that a matter to make me fret?
That a calamity hard to be borne?
Well, he may live to hate me yet.
Fool that I am to be vext with his pride!
I past him, I was crossing his lands;
He stood on the path a little aside;
His face, as I grant, in spite of spite,
Has a broad-blown comeliness, red and white,
And six feet two, as I think, he stands;
But his essences turn'd the live air sick,
And barbarous opulence jewel-thick
Sunn'd itself on his breast and his hands.

II.

Who shall call me ungentle, unfair,
I long'd so heartily then and there
To give him the grasp of fellowship;
But while I past he was humming an air,
Stopt, and then with a riding whip
Leisurely tapping a glossy boot,
And curving a contumelious lip,
Gorgonized me from head to foot
With a stony British stare.

III.

Why sits he here in his father's chair?
That old man never comes to his place:
Shall I believe him ashamed to be seen?
For only once, in the village street,
Last year, I caught a glimpse of his face,
A gray old wolf and a lean.
Scarcely, now, would I call him a cheat;
For then, perhaps, as a child of deceit,
She might by a true descent be untrue;
And Maud is as true as Maud is sweet:
Tho' I fancy her sweetness only due
To the sweeter blood by the other side;
Her mother has been a thing complete,
However she came to be so allied.
And fair without, faithful within,
Maud to him is nothing akin:
Some peculiar mystic grace
Made her only the child of her mother,
And heap'd the whole inherited sin
On that huge scapegoat of the race,
All, all upon the brother.

IV.

Peace, angry spirit, and let him be!
Has not his sister smiled on me?

XIV.

I.

Maud has a garden of roses
And lilies fair on a lawn;
There she walks in her state
And tends upon bed and bower,
And thither I climb'd at dawn
And stood by her garden-gate;
A lion ramps at the top,
He is clapst by a passion-flower.

II.

Maud's own little oak-room
(Which Maud, like a precious stone
Set in the heart of the carven gloom,
Lights with herself, when alone
She sits by her music and books
And her brother lingers late
With a roystering company) looks
Upon Maud's own garden-gate:
And I thought as I stood, if a hand, as white
As ocean-foam in the moon, were laid
On the hasp of the window, and my Delight
Had a sudden desire, like a glorious ghost, to glide,
Like a beam of the seventh Heaven, down to my side,
There were but a step to be made.

III.

The fancy flatter'd my mind,
And again seem'd overbold;
Now I thought that she cared for me,
Now I thought she was kind
Only because she was cold.

IV.

I heard no sound where I stood
But the rivulet on from the lawn
Running down to my own dark wood;
Or the voice of the long sea-wave as it swell'd
Now and then in the dim-gray dawn;
But I look'd, and round, all round the house I beheld
The death-white curtain drawn;
Felt a horror over me creep,
Prickle my skin and catch my breath,
Knew that the death-white curtain meant but sleep,
Yet I shudder'd and thought like a fool of the sleep of death.

XV.

So dark a mind within me dwells,
And I make myself such evil cheer,
That if *I* be dear to some one else,
Then some one else may have much to fear;
But if *I* be dear to some one else,
Then I should be to myself more dear.

Shall I not take care of all that I think,
Yea ev'n of wretched meat and drink,
If I be dear,
If I be dear to some one else.

XVI.

I.

This lump of earth has left his estate
The lighter by the loss of his weight;
And so that he find what he went to seek,
And fulsome Pleasure clog him, and drown
His heart in the gross mud-honey of town,
He may stay for a year who has gone for a week:
But this is the day when I must speak,
And I see my Oread coming down,
O this is the day!
O beautiful creature, what am I
That I dare to look her way;
Think I may hold dominion sweet,
Lord of the pulse that is lord of her breast,
And dream of her beauty with tender dread,
From the delicate Arab arch of her feet
To the grace that, bright and light as the crest
Of a peacock, sits on her shining head,
And she knows it not: O, if she knew it,
To know her beauty might half undo it.
I know it the one bright thing to save
My yet young life in the wilds of Time,
Perhaps from madness, perhaps from crime,
Perhaps from a selfish grave.

II.

What, if she be fasten'd to this fool lord,
Dare I bid her abide by her word?
Should I love her so well if she
Had given her word to a thing so low?
Shall I love her well if she
Can break her word were it even for me?
I trust that it is not so.

III.

Catch not my breath, O clamorous heart,
Let not my tongue be a thrall to my eye,
For I must tell her before we part,
I must tell her, or die.

XVII.

Go not, happy day,
From the shining fields,
Go not, happy day,
Till the maiden yields.
Rosy is the West,
Rosy is the South,
Roses are her cheeks,
And a rose her mouth
When the happy Yes
Falters from her lips,
Pass and blush the news
Over glowing ships;
Over blowing seas,
Over seas at rest,
Pass the happy news,
Blush it thro' the West;
Till the red man dance
By his red cedar-tree,
And the red man's babe
Leap, beyond the sea.
Blush from West to East,
Blush from East to West,
Till the West is East,
Blush it thro' the West.
Rosy is the West,
Rosy is the South,
Roses are her cheeks,
And a rose her mouth.

XVIII.

I.

I have led her home, my love, my only friend.
There is none like her, none.

"SHE SLEEPS"—*Page 86.*

And never yet so warmly ran my blood
And sweetly, on and on
Calming itself to the long-wish'd-for end,
Full to the banks, close on the promised good.

II.

None like her, none.
Just now the dry-tongued laurels' pattering talk
Seem'd her light foot along the garden walk,
And shook my heart to think she comes once more;
But even then I heard her close the door,
The gates of Heaven are closed, and she is gone.

III.

There is none like her, none.
Nor will be when our summers have deceased.
O, art thou sighing for Lebanon
In the long breeze that streams to thy delicious East,
Sighing for Lebanon,
Dark cedar, tho' thy limbs have here increased,
Upon a pastoral slope as fair,
And looking to the South, and fed
With honey'd rain and delicate air,
And haunted by the starry head
Of her whose gentle will has changed my fate,
And made my life a perfumed altar-flame;
And over whom thy darkness must have spread
With such delight as theirs of old, thy great
Forefathers of the thornless garden, there
Shadowing the snow-limb'd Eve from whom she came.

IV.

Here will I lie, while these long branches sway,
And you fair stars that crown a happy day
Go in and out as if at merry play,
Who am no more so all forlorn,
As when it seem'd far better to be born
To labor and the mattock-harden'd hand,
Than nursed at ease and brought to understand
A sad astrology, the boundless plan
That makes you tyrants in your iron skies,
Innumerable, pitiless, passionless eyes,
Cold fires, yet with power to burn and brand
His nothingness into man.

V.

But now shine on, and what care I,
Who in this stormy gulf have found a pearl
The countercharm of space and hollow sky,
And do accept my madness, and would die
To save from some slight shame one simple girl.

VI.

Would die; for sullen-seeming Death may give
More life to Love than is or ever was
In our low world, where yet 'tis sweet to live.
Let no one ask me how it came to pass;
It seems that I am happy, that to me
A livelier emerald twinkles in the grass,
A purer sapphire melts into the sea.

VII.

Not die; but live a life of truest breath,
And teach true life to fight with mortal wrongs.
O, why should Love, like men in drinking-songs,
Spice his fair banquet with the dust of death?

Make answer, Maud my bliss,
Maud made my Maud by that long loving kiss,
Life of my life, wilt thou not answer this?
'The dusky strand of Death inwoven here
With dear Love's tie, makes Love himself more dear.'

VIII.

Is that enchanted moan only the swell
Of the long waves that roll in yonder bay?
And hark the clock within, the silver knell
Of twelve sweet hours that past in bridal white,
And died to live, long as my pulses play;
But now by this my love has closed her sight
And given false death her hand, and stol'n away
To dreamful wastes where footless fancies dwell
Among the fragments of the golden day.
May nothing there her maiden grace affright!
Dear heart, I feel with thee the drowsy spell.
My bride to be, my evermore delight,
My own heart's heart, my ownest own, farewell;
It is but for a little space I go:
And ye meanwhile far over moor and fell
Beat to the noiseless music of the night!
Has our whole earth gone nearer to the glow
Of your soft splendors that you look so bright?
I have climb'd nearer out of lonely Hell.
Beat, happy stars, timing with things below,
Beat with my heart more blest than heart can tell,
Blest, but for some dark undercurrent woe
That seems to draw—but it shall not be so:
Let all be well, be well.

XIX.

I.

Her brother is coming back to-night,
Breaking up my dream of delight.

II.

My dream? do I dream of bliss?
I have walk'd awake with Truth.
O when did a morning shine
So rich in atonement as this
For my dark-dawning youth,
Darken'd watching a mother decline
And that dead man at her heart and mine:
For who was left to watch her but I?
Yet so did I let my freshness die.

III.

I trust that I did not talk
To gentle Maud in our walk
(For often in lonely wanderings
I have cursed him even to lifeless things)
But I trust that I did not talk,
Not touch on her father's sin:
I am sure I did but speak
Of my mother's faded cheek
When it slowly grew so thin,
That I felt she was slowly dying
Vext with lawyers and harass'd with debt:
For how often I caught her with eyes all wet,
Shaking her head at her son and sighing
A world of trouble within!

IV.

And Maud too, Maud was moved
To speak of the mother she loved
As one scarce less forlorn,
Dying abroad and it seems apart
From him who had ceased to share her heart,

And ever mourning over the feud,
The household Fury sprinkled with blood
By which our houses are torn:
How strange was what she said,
When only Maud and the brother
Hung over her dying bed—
That Maud's dark father and mine
Had bound us one to the other,
Betrothed us over their wine,
On the day when Maud was born;
Seal'd her mine from her first sweet breath.
Mine, mine by a right, from birth till death.
Mine, mine—our fathers have sworn.

V.

But the true blood spilt had in it a heat
To dissolve the precious seal on a bond,
That, if left uncancell'd, had been so sweet:
And none of us thought of a something beyond,
A desire that awoke in the heart of the child,
As it were a duty done to the tomb,
To be friends for her sake, to be reconciled;
And I was cursing them and my doom,
And letting a dangerous thought run wild
While often abroad in the fragrant gloom
Of foreign churches—I see her there,
Bright English lily, breathing a prayer
To be friends, to be reconciled!

VI.

But then what a flint is he!
Abroad, at Florence, at Rome,
I find whenever she touch'd on me
This brother had laugh'd her down,
And at last, when each came home,
He had darken'd into a frown,
Chid her, and forbid her to speak
To me, her friend of the years before;
And this was what had redden'd her cheek
When I bow'd to her on the moor.

VII.

Yet Maud, altho' not blind
To the faults of his heart and mind,
I see she cannot but love him,
And says he is rough but kind,
And wishes me to approve him,
And tells me, when she lay
Sick once, with a fear of worse,
That he left his wine and horses and play,
Sat with her, read to her, night and day,
And tended her like a nurse.

VIII.

Kind? but the deathbed desire
Spurn'd by this heir of the liar—
Rough but kind? yet I know
He has plotted against me in this,
That he plots against me still.
Kind to Maud? that were not amiss.
Well, rough but kind; why let it be so:
For shall not Maud have her will?

IX.

For, Maud, so tender and true,
As long as my life endures
I feel I shall owe you a debt,
That I never can hope to pay;
And if ever I should forget
That I owe this debt to you
And for your sweet sake to yours;
O then, what then shall I say?—
If ever I *should* forget,
May God make me more wretched
Than ever I have been yet!

X.

So now I have sworn to bury
All this dead body of hate,
I feel so free and so clear
By the loss of that dead weight,
That I should grow light-headed, I fear,
Fantastically merry;
But that her brother comes, like a blight
On my fresh hope, to the Hall to-night.

XX.

I.

Strange, that I felt so gay,
Strange, that I tried to-day
To beguile her melancholy;
The Sultan, as we name him,—
She did not wish to blame him—
But he vext her and perplext her
With his worldly talk and folly:
Was it gentle to reprove her
For stealing out of view
From a little lazy lover
Who but claims her as his due?
Or for chilling his caresses
By the coldness of her manners,
Nay, the plainness of her dresses?
Now I know her but in two,
Nor can pronounce upon it
If one should ask me whether
The habit, hat, and feather,
Or the frock and gipsy bonnet
Be the neater and completer;
For nothing can be sweeter
Than maiden Maud in either.

II.

But to-morrow, if we live,
Our ponderous squire will give
A grand political dinner
To half the squirelings near;
And Maud will wear her jewels,
And the bird of prey will hover,
And the titmouse hope to win her
With his chirrup at her ear.

III.

A grand political dinner
To the men of many acres,
A gathering of the Tory,
A dinner and then a dance
For the maids and marriage-makers,
And every eye but mine will glance
At Maud in all her glory.

IV.

For I am not invited,
But, with the Sultan's pardon,
I am all as well delighted,
For I know her own rose-garden,
And mean to linger in it
Till the dancing will be over;
And then, oh then, come out to me
For a minute, but for a minute,
Come out to your own true lover,
That your true lover may see
Your glory also, and render
All homage to his own darling,
Queen Maud in all her splendor.

XXI.

Rivulet crossing my ground,
And bringing me down from the Hall
This garden-rose that I found,
Forgetful of Maud and me,
And lost in trouble and moving round
Here at the head of a tinkling fall,
And trying to pass to the sea;
O Rivulet, born at the Hall,
My Maud has sent it by thee
(If I read her sweet will right)
On a blushing mission to me,
Saying in odor and color, 'Ah, be
Among the roses to-night.'

XXII.

I.

Come into the garden, Maud,
For the black bat, night, has flown,
Come into the garden, Maud,
I am here at the gate alone;
And the woodbine spices are wafted abroad,
And the musk of the rose is blown.

II.

For a breeze of morning moves,
And the planet of Love is on high,
Beginning to faint in the light that she loves
On a bed of daffodil sky,
To faint in the light of the sun she loves,
To faint in his light, and to die.

III.

All night have the roses heard
The flute, violin, bassoon;
All night has the casement jessamine stirr'd
To the dancers dancing in tune;

Till a silence fell with the waking bird,
And a hush with the setting moon.

IV.

I said to the lily, 'There is but one
With whom she has heart to be gay.
When will the dancers leave her alone?
She is weary of dance and play.'
Now half to the setting moon are gone,
And half to the rising day;
Low on the sand and loud on the stone
The last wheel echoes away.

V.

I said to the rose, 'The brief night goes
In babble and revel and wine.
O young lord-lover, what sighs are those,
For one that will never be thine?
But mine, but mine,' so I sware to the rose,
'For ever and ever, mine.'

VI.

And the soul of the rose went into my blood,
As the music clash'd in the hall,
And long by the garden lake I stood,
For I heard your rivulet fall
From the lake to the meadow and on to the wood,
Our wood, that is dearer than all;

VII.

From the meadow your walks have left so sweet
That whenever a March-wind sighs
He sets the jewel-print of your feet
In violets blue as your eyes,
To the woody hollows in which we meet
And the valleys of Paradise.

VIII.

The slender acacia would not shake
One long milk-bloom on the tree;
The white lake-blossom fell into the lake
As the pimpernel dozed on the lea;
But the rose was awake all night for your sake,
Knowing your promise to me;
The lilies and roses were all awake,
They sigh'd for the dawn and thee.

IX.

Queen rose of the rosebud garden of girls,
Come hither, the dances are done,
In gloss of satin and glimmer of pearls,
Queen lily and rose in one;
Shine out, little head, sunning over with curls,
To the flowers, and be their sun.

X.

There has fallen a splendid tear
From the passion-flower at the gate.
She is coming, my dove, my dear;
She is coming, my life, my fate;
The red rose cries, 'She is near, she is near;'
And the white rose weeps, 'She is late;'
The larkspur listens, 'I hear, I hear;'
And the lily whispers, 'I wait.'

XI.

She is coming, my own, my sweet;
Were it ever so airy a tread,
My heart would hear her and beat,
Were it earth in an earthy bed;
My dust would hear her and beat,
Had I lain for a century dead;
Would start and tremble under her feet,
And blossom in purple and red.

PART II.

I.

1.

'THE fault was mine, the fault was mine'—

Why am I sitting here so stunn'd and still,
Plucking the harmless wild-flower on the hill?—
It is this guilty hand!—
And there rises ever a passionate cry
From underneath in the darkening land—
What is it, that has been done?
O dawn of Eden bright over earth and sky,
The fires of Hell brake out of thy rising sun,
The fires of Hell and of Hate;
For she, sweet soul, had hardly spoken a word,
When her brother ran in his rage to the gate,
He came with the babe-faced lord;
Heap'd on her terms of disgrace,
And while she wept, and I strove to be cool,
He fiercely gave me the lie,
Till I with as fierce an anger spoke,
And he struck me, madman, over the face,
Struck me before the languid fool,
Who was gaping and grinning by:
Struck for himself an evil stroke;
Wrought for his house an irredeemable woe;
For front to front in an hour we stood,
And a million horrible bellowing echoes broke
From the red-ribb'd hollow behind the wood,
And thunder'd up into Heaven the Christless code,
That must have life for a blow.
Ever and ever afresh they seem'd to grow.
Was it he lay there with a fading eye?
'The fault was mine,' he whisper'd, 'fly!'
Then glided out of the joyous wood
The ghastly Wraith of one that I know;
And there rang on a sudden a passionate cry,
A cry for a brother's blood:
It will ring in my heart and my ears, till I die, till I die.

II.

Is it gone? my pulses beat—
What was it? a lying trick of the brain?
Yet I thought I saw her stand,
A shadow there at my feet,
High over the shadowy land.
It is gone; and the heavens fall in a gentle rain,
When they should burst and drown with deluging storms
The feeble vassals of wine and anger and lust,
The little hearts that know not how to forgive:
Arise, my God, and strike, for we hold Thee just,
Strike dead the whole weak race of venomous worms,
That sting each other here in the dust;
We are not worthy to live.

II.

I.

See what a lovely shell,
Small and pure as a pearl,
Lying close to my foot,
Frail, but a work divine,
Made so fairily well
With delicate spire and whorl,
How exquisitely minute,
A miracle of design!

II.

What is it? a learned man
Could give it a clumsy name.
Let him name it who can,
The beauty would be the same.

III.

The tiny cell is forlorn,
Void of the little living will
That made it stir on the shore.
Did he stand at the diamond door
Of his house in a rainbow frill?
Did he push, when he was uncurl'd,
A golden foot or a fairy horn
Thro' his dim water-world?

IV.

Slight, to be crush'd with a tap
Of my finger-nail on the sand,
Small, but a work divine,
Frail, but of force to withstand,
Year upon year, the shock
Of cataract seas that snap
The three decker's oaken spine
Athwart the ledges of rock,
Here on the Breton strand!

V.

Breton, not Briton; here
Like a shipwreck'd man on a coast
Of ancient fable and fear—
Plagued with a flitting to and fro,
A disease, a hard mechanic ghost
That never came from on high
Nor ever arose from below,
But only moves with the moving eye,
Flying along the land and the main—
Why should it look like Maud?
Am I to be overawed
By what I cannot but know
Is a juggle born of the brain?

VI.

Back from the Breton coast,
Sick of a nameless fear,
Back to the dark sea-line
Looking, thinking of all I have lost;
An old song vexes my ear;
But that of Lamech is mine.

VII.

For years, a measureless ill,
For years, for ever, to part—
But she, she would love me still;
And as long, O God, as she
Have a grain of love for me,
So long, no doubt, no doubt,
Shall I nurse in my dark heart,
However weary, a spark of will
Not to be trampled out.

VIII.

Strange, that the mind, when fraught
With a passion so intense
One would think that it well
Might drown all life in the eye,—
That it should, by being so over-wrought,
Suddenly strike on a sharper sense
For a shell, or a flower, little things
Which else would have been past by!
And now I remember, I,
When he lay dying there,
I noticed one of his many rings
(For he had many, poor worm) and thought
It is his mother's hair.

IX.

Who knows if he be dead?
Whether I need have fled?
Am I guilty of blood?
However this may be,
Comfort her, comfort her, all things good,
While I am over the sea!
Let me and my passionate love go by,
But speak to her all things holy and high,
Whatever happen to me!
Me and my harmful love go by;
But come to her waking, find her asleep,
Powers of the height, Powers of the deep,
And comfort her tho' I die.

III.

Courage, poor heart of stone!
I will not ask thee why
Thou canst not understand
That thou art left for ever alone:
Courage, poor stupid heart of stone.—
Or if I ask thee why,
Care not thou to reply:
She is but dead, and the time is at hand
When thou shalt more than die.

IV.

I.

O that 'twere possible
After long grief and pain
To find the arms of my true love
Round me once again!

II.

When I was wont to meet her
In the silent woody places
By the home that gave me birth,
We stood tranced in long embraces
Mixt with kisses sweeter sweeter
Than anything on earth.

III.

A shadow flits before me,
Not thou, but like to thee:
Ah Christ, that it were possible
For one short hour to see
The souls we loved, that they might tell us
What and where they be.

IV.

It leads me forth at evening,
It lightly winds and steals
In a cold white robe before me,
When all my spirit reels
At the shouts, the leagues of lights,
And the roaring of the wheels.

V.

Half the night I waste in sighs,
Half in dreams I sorrow after
The delight of early skies;
In a wakeful doze I sorrow
For the hand, the lips, the eyes,
For the meeting of the morrow,
The delight of happy laughter,
The delight of low replies.

VI.

'Tis a morning pure and sweet,
And a dewy splendor falls
On the little flower that clings
To the turrets and the walls;
'Tis a morning pure and sweet,
And the light and shadow fleet;
She is walking in the meadow,
And the woodland echo rings;
In a moment we shall meet;
She is singing in the meadow
And the rivulet at her feet
Ripples on in light and shadow
To the ballad that she sings.

VII.

Do I hear her sing as of old,
My bird with the shining head,
My own dove with the tender eye?
But there rings on a sudden passionate cry,
There is some one dying or dead,
And a sullen thunder is roll'd;
For a tumult shakes the city,
And I wake, my dream is fled;
In the shuddering dawn, behold,
Without knowledge, without pity,
By the curtains of my bed
That abiding phantom cold.

VIII.

Get thee hence, nor come again,
Mix not memory with doubt,
Pass, thou deathlike type of pain,
Pass and cease to move about!
'Tis the blot upon the brain
That *will* show itself without.

IX.

Then I rise, the eavedrops fall,
And the yellow vapors choke
The great city sounding wide;
The day comes, a dull red ball
Wrapt in drifts of lurid smoke
On the misty river-tide.

X.

Thro' the hubbub of the market
I steal, a wasted frame,
It crosses here, it crosses there,
Thro' all that crowd confused and loud,
The shadow still the same;
And on my heavy eyelids
My anguish hangs like shame.

XI.

Alas for her that met me,
That heard me softly call,
Came glimmering thro' the laurels
At the quiet evenfall,
In the garden by the turrets
Of the old manorial hall.

XII.

Would the happy spirit descend,
From the realms of light and song,
In the chamber or the street,
As she looks among the blest,
Should I fear to greet my friend
Or to say 'Forgive the wrong,'
Or to ask her, 'Take me, sweet,
To the regions of thy rest'?

XIII.

But the broad light glares and beats,
And the shadow flits and fleets
And will not let me be;
And I loathe the squares and streets,
And the faces that one meets,
Hearts with no love for me:
Always I long to creep
Into some still cavern deep,
There to weep, and weep, and weep
My whole soul out to thee.

V.

I.

Dead, long dead,
Long dead!
And my heart is a handful of dust,
And the wheels go over my head,
And my bones are shaken with pain,
For into a shallow grave they are thrust,
Only a yard beneath the street,
And the hoofs of the horses beat, beat,
The hoofs of the horses beat,
Beat into my scalp and my brain,
With never an end to the stream of passing feet,
Driving, hurrying, marrying, burying
Clamor and rumble, and ringing and clatter,
And here beneath it is all as bad,
For I thought the dead had peace, but it is not so;
To have no peace in the grave, is that not sad?
But up and down and to and fro,
Ever about me the dead men go;
And then to hear a dead man chatter
Is enough to drive one mad.

II.

Wretchedest age, since Time began,
They cannot even bury a man;
And tho' we paid our tithes in the days that are gone,
Not a bell was rung, not a prayer was read;
It is that which makes us loud in the world of the dead;
There is none that does his work, not one;
A touch of their office might have sufficed,
But the churchmen fain would kill their church,
As the churches have kill'd their Christ.

III.

See, there is one of us sobbing,
No limit to his distress;
And another, a lord of all things, praying
To his own great self, as I guess;
And another, a statesman there, betraying
His party-secret, fool, to the press;
And yonder a vile physician, blabbing
The case of his patient—all for what?
To tickle the maggot born in an empty head,
And wheedle a world that loves him not,
For it is but a world of the dead.

IV.

Nothing but idiot gabble!
For the prophecy given of old
And then not understood,
Has come to pass as foretold;
Not let any man think for the public good,
But babble, merely for babble.
For I never whisper'd a private affair
Within the hearing of cat or mouse,
No, not to myself in the closet alone,
But I heard it shouted at once from the top of the house;
Everything came to be known.
Who told *him* we were there?

V.

Not that gray old wolf, for he came not back
From the wilderness, full of wolves, where he used to lie;
He has gather'd the bones for his o'ergrown whelp to crack;
Crack them now for yourself, and howl, and die.

VI.

Prophet, curse me the blabbing lip,
And curse me the British vermin, the rat;
I know not whether he came in the Hanover ship,
But I know that he lies and listens mute
In an ancient mansion's crannies and holes:
Arsenic, arsenic, sure, would do it,
Except that now we poison our babes, poor souls!
It is all used up for that.

VII.

Tell him now: she is standing here at my head;
Not beautiful now, not even kind;
He may take her now; for she never speaks her mind,
But is ever the one thing silent here.
She is not *of* us, as I divine;
She comes from another stiller world of the dead,
Stiller, not fairer than mine.

VIII.

But I know where a garden grows,
Fairer than aught in the world beside,
All made up of the lily and rose
That blow by night, when the season is good,
To the sound of dancing music and flutes:
It is only flowers, they had no fruits,
And I almost fear they are not roses, but blood;
For the keeper was one, so full of pride,
He linkt a dead man there to a spectral bride;
For he, if he had not been a Sultan of brutes,
Would he have that hole in his side?

IX.

But what will the old man say?
He laid a cruel snare in a pit
To catch a friend of mine one stormy day;
Yet now I could even weep to think of it;
For what will the old man say
When he comes to the second corpse in the pit?

X.

Friend, to be struck by the public foe,
Then to strike him and lay him low,
That were a public merit, far,
Whatever the Quaker holds, from sin;
But the red life spilt for a private blow—
I swear to you, lawful and lawless war
Are scarcely even akin.

XI.

O me, why have they not buried me deep enough?
Is it kind to have made me a grave so rough,
Me, that was never a quiet sleeper?
Maybe still I am but half-dead;
Then I cannot be wholly dumb;
I will cry to the steps above my head
And somebody, surely, some kind heart will come
To bury me, bury me
Deeper, ever so little deeper.

PART III.

VI.

I.

My life has crept so long on a broken wing
Thro' cells of madness, haunts of horror and fear,
That I come to be grateful at last for a little thing:
My mood is changed, for it fell at a time of year
When the face of night is fair on the dewy downs,
And the shining daffodil dies, and the Charioteer
And starry Gemini hang like glorious crowns
Over Orion's grave low down in the west,
That like a silent lightning under the stars
She seem'd to divide in a dream from a band of the blest,
And spoke of a hope for the world in the coming wars—
'And in that hope, dear soul, let trouble have rest,
Knowing I tarry for thee,' and pointed to Mars
As he glow'd like a ruddy shield on the Lion's breast.

II.

And it was but a dream, yet it yielded a dear delight
To have look'd, tho' but in a dream, upon eyes so fair,
That had been in a weary world my one thing bright;
And it was but a dream, yet it lighten'd my despair
When I thought that a war would arise in defence of the right,
That an iron tyranny now should bend or cease,
The glory of manhood stand on his ancient height,
Nor Britain's one sole God be the millionaire:
No more shall commerce be all in all, and Peace
Pipe on her pastoral hillock a languid note,
And watch her harvest ripen, her herd increase,
Nor the cannon-bullet rust on a slothful shore,
And the cobweb woven across the cannon's throat
Shall shake its threaded tears in the wind no more.

III.

And as months ran on and rumor of battle grew,
'It is time, it is time, O passionate heart,' said I
(For I cleaved to a cause that I felt to be pure and true),
'It is time, O passionate heart and morbid eye,
That old hysterical mock-disease should die.'
And I stood on a giant deck and mix'd my breath
With a loyal people shouting a battle cry,
Till I saw the dreary phantom arise and fly
Far into the North, and battle, and seas of death.

IV.

Let it go or stay, so I wake to the higher aims
Of a land that has lost for a little her lust of gold,

And love of a peace that was full of wrongs and shames,
Horrible, hateful, monstrous, not to be told;
And hail once more to the banner of battle unroll'd!
Tho' many a light shall darken, and many shall weep
For those that are crush'd in the clash of jarring claims,
Yet God's just wrath shall be wreak'd on a giant liar;
And many a darkness into the light shall leap,
And shine in the sudden making of splendid names,
And noble thought be freër under the sun,
And the heart of a people beat with one desire;
For the peace, that I deem'd no peace, is over and done,
And now by the side of the Black and the Baltic deep,
And deathful-grinning mouths of the fortress, flames
The blood-red blossom of war with a heart of fire.

V.

Let it flame or fade, and the war roll down like a wind,
We have proved we have hearts in a cause, we are noble still,
And myself have awaked, as it seems, to the better mind;
It is better to fight for the good than to rail at the ill;
I have felt with my native land, I am one with my kind,
I embrace the purpose of God, and the doom assign'd.

THE FIRST QUARREL.

(IN THE ISLE OF WIGHT.)

I.

'WAIT a little,' you say, 'you are sure it 'll all come right,'
But the boy was born i' trouble, an' looks so wan an' so white:
Wait! an' once I ha' waited—I hadn't to wait for long.
Now I wait, wait, wait for Harry.—No, no, you are doing me wrong!
Harry and I were married: the boy can hold up his head,
The boy was born in wedlock, but after my man was dead;
I ha' work'd for him fifteen years, an' I work an' I wait to the end.
I am all alone in the world, an' you are my only friend.

II.

Doctor, if *you* can wait, I'll tell you the tale o' my life.
When Harry an' I were children, he call'd me his own little wife;
I was happy when I was with him, an' sorry when he was away,
An' when we play'd together, I loved him better than play;
He workt me the daisy chain—he made me the cowslip ball,
He fought the boys that were rude, an' I loved him better than all.
Passionate girl tho' I was, an' often at home in disgrace,
I never could quarrel with Harry—I had but to look in his face.

III.

There was a farmer in Dorset of Harry's kin, that had need
Of a good stout lad at his farm; he sent, an' the father agreed;
So Harry was bound to the Dorsetshire farm for years an' for years;
I walked with him down to the quay, poor lad, an' we parted in tears.

The boat was beginning to move, we
heard them a-ringing the bell,
'I'll never love any but you, God bless
you, my own little Nell.'

IV.

I was a child, an' he was a child, an'
he came to harm;
There was a girl, a hussy, that workt
with him up at the farm,
One had deceived her an' left her
alone with her sin an' her shame,
And so she was wicked with Harry;
the girl was the most to blame.

V.

And years went over till I that was
little had grown so tall,
The men would say of the maids, 'Our
Nelly's the flower of 'em all.'
I didn't take heed o' *them*, but I taught
myself all I could
To make a good wife for Harry, when
Harry came home for good.

VI.

Often I seem'd unhappy, and often as
happy too,
For I heard it abroad in the fields 'I'll
never love any but you;'
'I'll never love any but you' the
morning song of the lark,
'I'll never love any but you' the night-
ingale's hymn in the dark.

VII.

And Harry came home at last, but he
look'd at me sidelong and shy,
Vext me a bit, till he told me that so
many years had gone by,
I had grown so handsome and tall—
that I might ha' forgot him
somehow—
For he thought—there were other lads
—he was fear'd to look at me
now.

VIII.

Hard was the frost in the field, we
were married o' Christmas day,
Married among the red berries, an' all
as merry as May—
Those were the pleasant times, my
house an' my man were my
pride,
We seem'd like ships i' the Channel
a-sailing with wind an' tide.

IX.

But work was scant in the Isle, tho'
he tried the villages round,
So Harry went over the Solent to see
if work could be found;
An' he wrote 'I ha' six weeks' work,
little wife, so far as I know;
I'll come for an hour to-morrow, an'
kiss you before I go.'

X.

So I set to righting the house, for
wasn't he coming that day?
An' I hit on an old deal-box that was
push'd in a corner away,
It was full of old odds an' ends, an' a
letter along wi' the rest,
I had better ha' put my naked hand
in a hornets' nest.

XI.

'Sweetheart'—this was the letter—
this was the letter I read—
'You promised to find me work near
you, an' I wish I was dead—
Didn't you kiss me an' promise? you
haven't done it my lad,
An' I almost died o' your going away,
an' I wish that I had.'

XII.

I too wish that I had—in the pleasant
times that had past,
Before I quarrel'd with Harry—*my*
quarrel—the first an' the last.

XIII.

For Harry came in, an' I flung him
the letter that drove me wild,
An' he told it me all at once, as sim-
ple as any child,

'What can it matter, my lass, what I did wi' my single life?
I ha' been as true to you as ever a man to his wife;
An' *she* wasn't one o' the worst. 'Then,' I said, 'I'm none o' the best.'
An' he smiled at me, 'Ain't you, my love? Come, come, little wife, let it rest!
The man isn't like the woman, no need to make such a stir.'
But he anger'd me all the more, an' I said 'You were keeping with her,
When I was a-loving you all along an' the same as before.'
An' he didn't speak for a while, an' he anger'd me more and more.
Then he patted my hand in his gentle way, 'Let bygones be!'
'Bygones! you kept yours hush'd,' I said, 'when you married me!
By-gones ma' be come-agains; an' *she* —in her shame an' her sin—
You'll have her to nurse my child, if I die o' my lying in!
You'll make her its second mother! I hate her—an' I hate you!'
Ah, Harry, my man, you had better ha' beaten me black an' blue
Than ha' spoken as kind as you did, when I were so crazy wi' spite,
'Wait a little, my lass, I am sure it 'ill all come right.'

XIV.

An' he took three turns in the rain, an' I watch'd him, an' when he came in
I felt that my heart was hard, he was all wet thro' to the skin,
An' I never said 'off wi' the wet,' I never said 'on wi' the dry,'
So I knew my heart was hard, when he came to bid me goodbye.
'You said that you hated me, Ellen, but that isn't true, you know;
I am going to leave you a bit—you'll kiss me before I go?'

XV

'Going! you're going to her—kiss her —if you will,' I said—
I was near my time wi' the boy, I must ha' been light i' my head—
'I had sooner be cursed than kiss'd!' —I didn't know well what I meant,
But I turn'd my face from *him*, an' he turn'd *his* face an' he went.

XVI.

And then he sent me a letter, 'I've gotten my work to do;
You wouldn't kiss me, my lass, an' I never loved any but you;
I am sorry for all the quarrel an' sorry for what she wrote,
I ha' six weeks' work in Jersey an' go to-night by the boat.'

XVII.

An' the wind began to rise, an' I thought of him out at sea,
An' I felt I had been to blame; he was always kind to me.
'Wait a little, my lass, I am sure it 'ill all come right'—
An' the boat went down that night—the boat went down that night.

RIZPAH.

17—.

I.

WAILING, wailing, wailing, the wind over land and sea—
And Willy's voice in the wind, 'O mother, come out to me.'
Why should he call me to-night, when he knows that I cannot go?
For the downs are as bright as day, and the full moon stares at the snow.

II.

We should be seen, my dear; they would spy us out of the town.

The loud black nights for us, and the storm rushing over the down,
When I cannot see my own hand, but am led by the creak of the chain,
And grovel and grope for my son till I find myself drenched with the rain.

III.

Anything fallen again? nay—what was there left to fall?
I have taken them home, I have number'd the bones, I have hidden them all.
What am I saying? and what are *you?* do you come as a spy?
Falls? what falls? who knows? As the tree falls so must it lie.

IV.

Who let her in? how long has she been? you—what have you heard?
Why did you sit so quiet? you never have spoken a word.
O—to pray with me—yes—a lady—none of their spies—
But the night has crept into my heart, and begun to darken my eyes.

V.

Ah—you, that have lived so soft, what should *you* know of the night,
The blast and the burning shame and the bitter frost and the fright?
I have done it, while you were asleep—you were only made for the day.
I have gather'd my baby together—and now you may go your way.

VI.

Nay—for it's kind of you, Madam, to sit by an old dying wife.
But say nothing hard of my boy, I have only an hour of life.
I kiss'd my boy in the prison, before he went out to die.
'They dared me to do it,' he said, and he never has told me a lie.
I whipt him for robbing an orchard once when he was but a child—
'The farmer dared me to do it,' he said; he was always so wild—
And idle—and couldn't be idle—my Willy, he never could rest.
The King should have made him a soldier, he would have been one of his best.

VII.

But he lived with a lot of wild mates, and they never would let him be good;
They swore that he dare not rob the mail, and he swore that he would;
And he took no life, but he took one purse, and when all was done
He flung it among his fellows—I'll none of it, said my son.

VIII.

I came into court to the Judge and the lawyers. I told them my tale,
God's own truth—but they kill'd him, they kill'd him for robbing the mail.
They hang'd him in chains for a show—we had always borne a good name—
To be hang'd for a thief—and then put away—isn't that enough shame?
Dust to dust—low down—let us hide! but they set him so high
That all the ships of the world could stare at him, passing by.
God 'ill pardon the hell-black rave; and horrible fowls of the air,
But not the black heart of the lawyer who kill'd him and hang'd him there.

IX.

And the jailer forced me away. I had bid him my last goodbye;
They had fasten'd the door of his cell. 'O mother!' I heard him cry.

I couldn't get back tho' I tried, he had something further to say,
And now I never shall know it. The jailer forced me away.

X.

Then since I couldn't but hear that cry of my boy that was dead,
They seized me and shut me up: they fasten'd me down on my bed.
'Mother, O mother!'—he call'd in the dark to me year after year—
They beat me for that, they beat me—you know that I couldn't but hear;
And then at the last they found I had grown so stupid and still
They let me abroad again—but the creatures had worked their will.

XI.

Flesh of my flesh was gone, but bone of my bone was left—
I stole them all from the lawyers—and you, will you call it a theft?—
My baby, the bones that had suck'd me, the bones that had laughed and had cried—
Theirs? O no! they are mine—not theirs—they had moved in my side.

XII.

Do you think I was scared by the bones? I kiss'd 'em, I buried 'em all—
I can't dig deep, I am old—in the night by the churchyard wall.
My Willy 'ill rise up whole when the trumpet of judgment 'ill sound,
But I charge you never to say that I laid him in holy ground.

XIII.

They would scratch him up—they would hang him again on the cursed tree.
Sin? O yes—we are sinners, I know—let all that be,
And read me a Bible verse of the Lord's good will toward men—
'Full of compassion and mercy, the Lord'—let me hear it again;
'Full of compassion and mercy—long-suffering.' Yes, O yes!
For the lawyer is born but to murder—the Saviour lives but to bless.
He'll never put on the black cap except for the worst of the worst,
And the first may be last—I have heard it in church—and the last may be first.
Suffering—O long-suffering—yes, as the Lord must know,
Year after year in the mist and the wind and the shower and the snow.

XIV.

Heard, have you? what? they have told you he never repented his sin.
How do they know it? are *they* his mother? are *you* of his kin?
Heard! have you ever heard, when the storm on the downs began,
The wind that 'ill wail like a child and the sea that 'ill moan like a man?

XV.

Election, Election and Reprobation—it's all very well.
But I go to-night to my boy, and I shall not find him in Hell.
For I cared so much for my boy that the Lord has look'd into my care,
And He means me I'm sure to be happy with Willy, I know not where.

XVI.

And if *he* be lost—but to save *my* soul, that is all your desire:
Do you think that I care for *my* soul if my boy be gone to the fire?

"WHERE LONG AND LARGELY WE CAROUSE."—*Page 93.*

I have been with God in the dark—
go, go, you may leave me alone—
You never have borne a child—you
are just as hard as a stone.

XVII.

Madam, I beg your pardon! I think
that you mean to be kind,
But I cannot hear what you say for
my Willy's voice in the wind—
The snow and the sky so bright—he
used but to call in the dark,
And he calls to me now from the
church and not from the gibbet
—for hark!
Nay—you can hear it yourself—it is
coming—shaking the walls—
Willy—the moon's in a cloud——
Good-night. I am going. He
calls.

THE NORTHERN COBBLER.

I.

WAÄIT till our Sally cooms in, fur
thou mun a' sights [1] to tell.
Eh, but I be maäin glad to seeä tha
sa 'arty an' well.
'Cast awaäy on a disolut land wi' a
vartical soon [2]!'
Strange fur to goä fur to think what
saäilors a' seëan an' a' doon;
'Summat to drink—sa' 'ot?' I 'a
nowt but Adam's wine:
What's the 'eät o' this little 'ill-side to
the 'eät o' the line?

[1] The vowels *aĭ*, pronounced separately though in the closest conjunction, best render the sound of the long *i* and *y* in this dialect. But since such words as *craĭin'* *daĭin'*, *whaĭ*, *aĭ* (I), etc., look awkward except in a page of express phonetics, I have thought it better to leave the simple *i* and *y*, and to trust that my readers will give them the broader pronunciation.

[2] The *oo* short, as in 'wood.'

II.

'What's i' tha bottle a-stanning
theer?' I'll tell tha. Gin.
But if thou wants thy grog, tha mun
goä fur it down to the inn.
Naay—fur I be maäin-glad, but thaw
tha was iver sa dry,
Thou gits naw gin fro' the bottle
theer, an' I'll tell tha why.

III.

Meä an' thy sister was married, when
wur it? back-end o' June,
Ten year sin', and wa 'greed as well
as a fiddle i' tune:
I could fettle and clump owd booöts
and shoes wi' the best on 'em
all,
As fer as fro' Thursby thurn hup to
Harmsby and Hutterby Hall.
We was busy as beeäs i' the bloom
an' as 'appy as 'art could think,
An' then the babby wur burn, and
then I taäkes to the drink.

IV.

An' I weänt gaäinsaäy it, my lad,
thaw I be hafe shaämed on it
now,
We could sing a good song at the
Plow, we could sing a good
song at the Plow;
Thaw once of a frosty night I slither'd
an' hurted my huck,[1]
An' I coom'd neck-an-crop soomtimes
slaäpe down i' the squad an'
the muck:
An' once I fowt wi' the Taäilor—not
hafe ov a man, my lad—
Fur he scrawm'd an' scratted my
faäce like a cat, an' it maäde
'er sa mad
That Sally she turn'd a tongue-
banger,[2] an' raäted ma, 'Sot-
tin' thy braäins
Guzzlin' an' soäkin' an' smoäkin' an'
hawmin'[3] about i' the laänes,
Soä sow-droonk that tha doesn not
touch thy 'at to the Squire;'

[1] Hip. [2] Scold. [3] Lounging.

An' I looök'd cock-eyed at my noäse
an' I seeäd 'im a-gittin' o' fire;
But sin' I wur hallus i' liquor an' hallus as droonk as a king,
Foälks' coostom flitted awaäy like a kite wi' a brokken string.

V.

An' Sally she wesh'd foalks' cloäths to keep the wolf fro' the door,
Eh but the moor she riled me, she druv me to drink the moor,
Fur I fun', when 'er back wur turn'd, wheer Sally's owd stockin' wur 'id,
An' I grabb'd the munny she maäde, and I weär'd it o' liquor, I did.

VI

An' one night I cooms 'oäm like a bull gotten loose at a faäir,
An' she wur a-waäitin' fo'mma, an' cryin' and teärin' 'er 'aäir,
An' I tummled athurt the craädle an' sweär'd as I'd breäk ivry stick
O' furnitur 'ere i' the 'ouse, an' I gied our Sally a kick,
An' I mash'd the taäbles an' chairs, an' she an' the babby beäl'd,[1]
Fur I knaw'd naw moor what I did nor a mortal beäst o' the feäld.

VII.

An' when I waäked i' the murnin' I seeäd that our Sally went laämed
Cos' o' the kick as I gied 'er, an' I wur dreädful ashaämed;
An' Sally wur sloomy[2] an' draggle taäil'd in an owd turn gown,
An' the babby's faace wurn't wesh'd an' the 'ole 'ouse hupside down

VIII.

An' then I minded our Sally sa pratty an' neät an' sweeät,
Straät as a pole an' cleän as a flower fro' 'eäd to feeät:

[1] Bellowed, cried out.

[2] Sluggish, out of spirits.

An' then I minded the fust kiss I gied 'er by Thursby thurn;
Theer wur a lark a-singin' 'is best of a Sunday at murn,
Couldn't see 'im, we 'eärd 'im a-mountin' oop 'igher an' 'igher,
An' then 'e turn'd to the sun, an' 'e shined like a sparkle o' fire.
'Doesn't tha see 'im,' she axes, 'fur I can see 'im?' an' I
Seeäd nobbut the smile o' the sun as danced in 'er pratty blue eye;
An' I says 'I mun gie tha a kiss,' an' Sally says 'Noä, thou moänt,'
But I gied 'er a kiss, an' then anoother, an' Sally says 'doänt!'

IX.

An' when we coom'd into Meeätin', at fust she wur all in a tew,
But, arter, we sing'd the 'ymn togither like birds on a beugh;
An' Muggins 'e preäch'd o' Hell-fire an' the loov o' God fur men,
An' then upo' coomin' awaäy Sally gied me a kiss ov 'ersen.

X.

Heer wur a fall fro' a kiss to a kick like Saätan as fell
Down out o' heaven i' Hell-fire—thaw theer's naw drinkin' i' Hell;
Mea fur to kick our Sally as kep the wolf fro' the door,
All along o' the drink, fur I loov'd 'er as well as afoor.

XI.

Sa like a greät num-cumpus I blubber'd awaäy o' the bed—
'Weänt niver do it naw moor;' an' Sally looökt up an' she said,
'I'll upowd it[1] tha weänt; thou'rt like the rest o' the men,
Thou'll goä sniffin' about the tap till tha does it ageän.
Theer's thy hennemy, man, an' I knaws, as knaws tha sa well,
That, if tha seeäs 'im an' smells 'im tha'll foller 'im slick into Hell.'

[1] I'll uphold it.

XII.

'Naäy,' says I, 'fur I weänt goä sniffin' about the tap.'
'Weänt tha?' she says, an' mysen I thowt i' mysen 'mayhap.'
'Noä:' an' I started awaäy like a shot, an' down to the Hinn,
An' I browt what tha seeäs stannin' theer, yon big black bottle o' gin.

XIII.

'That caps owt,'[1] says Sally, an' saw she begins to cry,
But I puts it inter 'er 'ands an' I says to 'er, 'Sally,' says I,
'Stan' 'im theer i' the naäme o' the Lord an' the power ov 'is Graäce,
Stan' 'im theer, fur I'll looök my hennemy straït i' the faäce,
Stan' 'im theer i' the winder, an' let ma looök at 'im then,
'E seeäms naw moor nor watter, an' 'e's the Divil's oän sen.'

XIV.

An' I wur down i' tha mouth, couldn't do naw work an' all,
Nasty an' snaggy an shaäky, an' poonch'd my 'and wi' the hawl,
But she wur a power o' coomfut, an' sattled 'ersen o' my knee,
An' coäkd an' coodled me oop till ageän I feel'd mysen free.

XV.

An' Sally she tell'd it about, an 'foälk stood a-gawmin'[2] in,
As thaw it wur summat bewitch'd istead of a quart o' gin;
An' some on 'em said it wur watter—an' I wur chousin' the wife,
Fur I couldn't 'owd 'ands off gin, wur it nobbut to saäve my life;
An' blacksmith 'e strips me the thick ov 'is airm, an' 'e shaws it to me,
'Feëal thou this! thou can't graw this upo' watter!' says he.

[1] That's beyond everything.
[2] Staring vacantly.

An' Doctor 'e calls o' Sunday an' just as candles was lit,
'Thou moänt do it,' he says, 'tha mun breäk 'im off bit by bit.'
'Thou'rt but a Methody-man,' says Parson, and laäys down 'is 'at,
An' 'e points to the bottle o' gin, 'but I respecks tha fur that;'
An' Squire, his oän very sen, walks down fro' the 'All to see,
An' 'e spanks 'is 'and into mine, 'fur I respecks tha,' says 'e;
An' coostom ageän draw'd in like a wind fro' far an' wide,
And browt me the booöts to be cobbled fro' hafe the coontryside.

XVI.

An' theer 'e stans an' theer 'e shall stan to my dying daäy;
I 'a gotten to loov 'im ageän in anoother kind of a waäy,
Proud on 'im, like, my lad, an' I keeäps 'im cleän an' bright,
Loovs 'im, an' roobs 'im, an' doosts 'im, an' puts 'im back i' the light.

XVII.

Wouldn't a pint a' sarved as well as a quart? Naw doubt:
But I liked a bigger feller to fight wi' an' fowt it out.
Fine an' meller 'e mun be by this, if I cared to taäste,
But I moänt, my lad, and I weänt fur I'd feäl mysen cleän disgraäced.

XVIII.

An' once I said to the Missis, 'My lass, when I cooms to die,
Smash the bottle to smithers, the Divil's in 'im,' said I.
But arter I chaänged my mind, an' if Sally be left aloän,
I'll hev 'im a-buried wi' mma an' taäke 'im afoor the Throän.

XIX.

Coom thou 'eer—yon laädy a-steppin' along the streeät,

Doesn't tha knaw 'er—sa prätty, an' feät, an' neät, an sweeät?
Look at the cloäths on 'er back, thebbe ammost spick-span-new,
An' Tommy's faäce be as fresh as a codlin wesh'd i' the dew.

XX.

'Ere be our Sally an' Tommy, an' we be a-going to dine,
Baäcon an' taätes, an' a beslings-pud-din'[1] an' Adam's wine;
But if tha wants ony grog tha mun goä fur it down to the Hinn,
Fur I weänt shed a drop on 'is blood, noä, not fur Sally's oän kin.

THE REVENGE.

A BALLAD OF THE FLEET.

I.

At Flores in the Azores Sir Richard Grenville lay,
And a pinnace, like a flutter'd bird, came flying from far away:
'Spanish ships of war at sea! we have sighted fifty-three!'
Then sware Lord Thomas Howard: ''Fore God I am no coward;
But I cannot meet them here, for my ships are out of gear,
And the half my men are sick. I must fly, but follow quick.
We are six ships of the line; can we fight with fifty-three?'

II.

Then spake Sir Richard Grenville: 'I know you are no coward;
You fly them for a moment to fight with them again.
But I've ninety men and more that are lying sick ashore.
I should count myself a coward if I left them, my Lord Howard,
To these Inquisition dogs and the devildoms of Spain.'

[1] A pudding made with the first milk of the cow after calving.

III.

So Lord Howard past away with five ships of war that day,
Till he melted like a cloud in the silent summer heaven;
But Sir Richard bore in hand all his sick men from the land
Very carefully and slow,
Men of Bideford in Devon,
And we laid them on the ballast down below;
For we brought them all aboard,
And they blest him in their pain, that they were not left to Spain,
To the thumbscrew and the stake, for the glory of the Lord.

IV.

He had only a hundred seamen to work the ship and to fight,
And he sailed away from Flores till the Spaniard came in sight,
With his huge sea-castles heaving upon the weather bow.
'Shall we fight or shall we fly?
Good Sir Richard, tell us now,
For to fight is but to die!
There'll be little of us left by the time this sun be set.'
And Sir Richard said again: 'We be all good English men.
Let us bang these dogs of Seville, the children of the devil,
For I never turn'd my back upon Don or devil yet.'

V.

Sir Richard spoke and he laugh'd, and we roar'd a hurrah, and so
The little Revenge ran on sheer into the heart of the foe,
With her hundred fighters on deck, and her ninety sick below;
For half of their fleet to the right and half to the left were seen,
And the little Revenge ran on thro' the long sea-lane between.

VI.

Thousands of their soldiers look'd down from their decks and laugh'd,

Thousands of their seamen made
mock at the mad little craft
Running on and on, till delay'd
By their mountain-like San Philip
that, of fifteen hundred tons,
And up-shadowing high above us
with her yawning tiers of guns,
Took the breath from our sails, and
we stay'd.

VII.

And while now the great San Philip
hung above us like a cloud
Whence the thunderbolt will fall
Long and loud,
Four galleons drew away
From the Spanish fleet that day,
And two upon the larboard and two
upon the starboard lay,
And the battle-thunder broke from
them all.

VIII.

But anon the great San Philip, she
bethought herself and went
Having that within her womb that
had left her ill content;
And the rest they came aboard us,
and they fought us hand to
hand,
For a dozen times they came with
their pikes and musqueteers,
And a dozen times we shook 'em off
as a dog that shakes his ears
When he leaps from the water to the
land.

IX.

And the sun went down, and the stars
came out far over the summer
sea,
But never a moment ceased the fight
of the one and the fifty-three.
Ship after ship, the whole night long,
their high-built galleons came,
Ship after ship, the whole night long,
with her battle-thunder and
flame;
Ship after ship, the whole night long,
drew back with her dead and
her shame.
For some were sunk and many were
shatter'd, and so could fight us
no more—
God of battles, was ever a battle like
this in the world before?

X.

For he said 'Fight on! fight on!'
Tho' his vessel was all but a wreck;
And it chanced that, when half of the
short summer night was gone,
With a grisly wound to be drest he
had left the deck,
But a bullet struck him that was
dressing it suddenly dead,
And himself he was wounded again in
the side and the head,
And he said 'Fight on! fight on!'

XI.

And the night went down, and the sun
smiled out far over the summer
sea,
And the Spanish fleet with broken
sides lay round us all in a ring;
But they dared not touch us again,
for they fear'd that we still
could sting,
So they watch'd what the end would
be.
And we had not fought them in vain,
But in perilous plight were we,
Seeing forty of our poor hundred were
slain,
And half of the rest of us maim'd for
life
In the crash of the cannonades and
the desperate strife;
And the sick men down in the hold
were most of them stark and
cold,
And the pikes were all broken or
bent, and the powder was all of
it spent;
And the masts and the rigging were
lying over the side;
But Sir Richard cried in his English
pride,
'We have fought such a fight for a
day and a night
As may never be fought again!
We have won great glory, my men!

And a day less or more
At sea or ashore,
We die—does it matter when?
Sink me the ship, Master Gunner—
sink her, split her in twain!
Fall into the hands of God, not into
the hands of Spain!'

XII.

And the gunner said 'Ay, ay,' but
the seamen made reply:
'We have children, we have wives,
And the Lord hath spared our lives.
We will make the Spaniard promise,
if we yield, to let us go;
We shall live to fight again and to
strike another blow.'
And the lion there lay dying, and they
yielded to the foe.

XIII.

And the stately Spanish men to their
flagship bore him then,
Where they laid him by the mast, old
Sir Richard caught at last,
And they praised him to his face with
their courtly foreign grace;
But he rose upon their decks, and he
cried:
'I have fought for Queen and Faith
like a valiant man and true;
I have only done my duty as a man is
bound to do:
With a joyful spirit I Sir Richard
Grenville die!'
And he fell upon their decks, and he
died.

XIV.

And they stared at the dead that had
been so valiant and true,
And had holden the power and glory
of Spain so cheap
That he dared her with one little ship
and his English few;
Was he devil or man? He was devil
for aught they knew,
But they sank his body with honor
down into the deep,
And they mann'd the Revenge with a
swarthier alien crew,
And away she sail'd with her loss and
long'd for her own;
When a wind from the lands they had
ruin'd awoke from sleep,
And the water began to heave and the
weather to moan,
And or ever that evening ended a
great gale blew,
And a wave like the wave that is
raised by an earthquake grew,
Till it smote on their hulls and their
sails and their masts and their
flags,
And the whole sea plunged and fell
on the shot-shatter'd navy of
Spain,
And the little Revenge herself went
down by the island crags
To be lost evermore in the main.

THE SISTERS.

THEY have left the doors ajar; and
by their clash,
And prelude on the keys, I know the
song,
Their favorite—which I call 'The
Tables Turned.'
Evelyn begins it 'O diviner Air.'

EVELYN.

O diviner Air,
Thro' the heat, the drowth, the dust,
the glare,
Far from out the west in shadowing
showers,
Over all the meadow baked and bare,
Making fresh and fair
All the bowers and the flowers,
Fainting flowers, faded bowers,
Over all this weary world of ours,
Breathe, diviner Air!

A sweet voice that—you scarce could
better that.
Now follows Edith echoing Evelyn.

EDITH.

O diviner light,
Thro' the cloud that roofs our noon with night,
Thro' the blotting mist, the blinding showers,
Far from out a sky for ever bright,
Over all the woodland's flooded bowers,
Over all the meadow's drowning flowers,
Over all this ruin'd world of ours,
Break, diviner light!

Marvellously like, their voices—and themselves!
Tho' one is somewhat deeper than the other,
As one is somewhat graver than the other—
Edith than Evelyn. Your good Uncle, whom
You count the father of your fortune, longs
For this alliance: let me ask you then,
Which voice most takes you? for I do not doubt
Being a watchful parent, you are taken
With one or other: tho' sometimes I fear
You may be flickering, fluttering in a doubt
Between the two—which must not be—which might
Be death to one: they both are beautiful:
Evelyn is gayer, wittier, prettier, says
The common voice, if one may trust it: she?
No! but the paler and the graver, Edith.
Woo her and gain her then: no wavering, boy!
The graver is perhaps the one for you
Who jest and laugh so easily and so well.
For love will go by contrast, as by likes.

No sisters ever prized each other more.
Not so: their mother and her sister loved
More passionately still.
But that my best
And oldest friend, your Uncle, wishes it,
And that I know you worthy every-way
To be my son, I might, perchance, be loath
To part them, or part from them: and yet one
Should marry, or all the broad lands in your view
From this bay window—which our house has held
Three hundred years—will pass collaterally.

My father with a child on either knee,
A hand upon the head of either child,
Smoothing their locks, as golden as his own
Were silver, 'get them wedded' would he say.
And once my prattling Edith ask'd him 'why?'
Ay, why? said he, 'for why should I go lame?'
Then told them of his wars, and of his wound.
For see—this wine—the grape from whence it flow'd
Was blackening on the slopes of Portugal,
When that brave soldier, down the terrible ridge
Plunged in the last fierce charge at Waterloo,
And caught the laming bullet. He left me this,
Which yet retains a memory of its youth,
As I of mine, and my first passion. Come
Here's to your happy union with my child!

Yet must you change your name: no fault of mine!

You say that you can do it as willingly
As birds make ready for their bridal-time
By change of feather: for all that, my boy,
Some birds are sick and sullen when they moult.
An old and worthy name! but mine that stirr'd
Among our civil wars and earlier too
Among the Roses, the more venerable.
I care not for a name—no fault of mine.
Once more—a happier marriage than my own!

You see yon Lombard poplar on the plain.
The highway running by it leaves a breadth
Of sward to left and right, where, long ago,
One bright May morning in a world of song,
I lay at leisure, watching overhead
The aërial poplar wave, an amber spire.

I dozed; I woke. An open landaulet
Whirl'd by, which, after it had past me, show'd
Turning my way, the loveliest face on earth.
The face of one there sitting opposite,
On whom I brought a strange unhappiness,
That time I did not see.

Love at first sight
May seem—with goodly rhyme and reason for it—
Possible—at first glimpse, and for a face
Gone in a moment—strange. Yet once, when first
I came on lake Llanberris in the dark,
A moonless night with storm—one lightning-fork
Flash'd out the lake; and tho' I loiter'd there
The full day after, yet in retrospect
That less than momentary thunder-sketch
Of lake and mountain conquers all the day.

The Sun himself has limn'd the face for me.
Not quite so quickly, no, nor half as well.
For look you here—the shadows are too deep,
And like the critic's blurring comment make
The veriest beauties of the work appear
The darkest faults: the sweet eyes frown: the lips
Seem but a gash. My sole memorial
Of Edith—no, the other,—both indeed.

So that bright face was flash'd thro' sense and soul
And by the poplar vanish'd—to be found
Long after, as it seem'd, beneath the tall
Tree-bowers, and those long-sweeping beechen boughs
Of our New Forest. I was there alone:
The phantom of the whirling landaulet
For ever past me by: when one quick peal
Of laughter drew me thro' the glimmering glades
Down to the snowlike sparkle of a cloth
On fern and foxglove. Lo, the face again,
My Rosalind in this Arden—Edith—all
One bloom of youth, health, beauty, happiness,
And moved to merriment at a passing jest.

There one of those about her knowing me

Call'd me to join them; so with these I spent
What seem'd my crowning hour, my day of days.

I woo'd her then, nor unsuccessfully,
The worse for her, for me! was I content?
Ay—no, not quite; for now and then I thought
Laziness, vague love-longings, the bright May,
Had made a heated haze to magnify
The charm of Edith—that a man's ideal
Is high in Heaven, and lodged with Plato's God,
Not findable here—content, and not content,
In some such fashion as a man may be
That having had the portrait of his friend
Drawn by an artist, looks at it, and says,
'Good! very like! not altogether he.'

As yet I had not bound myself by words,
Only, believing I loved Edith, made
Edith love *me*. Then came the day when I,
Flattering myself that all my doubts were fools
Born of the fool this Age that doubts of all—
Not I that day of Edith's love or mine—
Had braced my purpose to declare myself:
I stood upon the stairs of Paradise.
The golden gates would open at a word.
I spoke it—told her of my passion, seen
And lost and found again, had got so far,
Had caught her hand, her eyelids fell
—I heard
Wheels, and a noise of welcome at the doors—
On a sudden after two Italian years
Had set the blossom of her health again,
The younger sister, Evelyn, enter'd—there,
There was the face, and altogether she.
The mother fell about the daughter's neck,
The sisters closed in one another's arms,
Their people throng'd about them from the hall,
And in the thick of question and reply
I fled the house, driven by one angel face,
And all the Furies.

I was bound to her;
I could not free myself in honor—bound
Not by the sounded letter of the word,
But counterpressures of the yielded hand
That timorously and faintly echoed mine,
Quick blushes, the sweet dwelling of her eyes
Upon me when she thought I did not see—
Were these not bonds? nay, nay, but could I wed her
Loving the other? do her that great wrong?
Had I not dream'd I loved her yestermorn?
Had I not known where Love, at first a fear,
Grew after marriage to full height and form?
Yet after marriage, that mock-sister there—
Brother-in-law—the fiery nearness of it—
Unlawful and disloyal brotherhood—
What end but darkness could ensue from this
For all the three? So Love and Honor jarr'd
Tho' Love and Honor join'd to raise the full
High-tide of doubt that sway'd me up and down
Advancing nor retreating.

Edith wrote:
'My mother bids me ask' (I did not
tell you—
A widow with less guile than many a
child.
God help the wrinkled children that
are Christ's
As well as the plump cheek—she
wrought us harm,
Poor soul, not knowing) 'are you ill?'
(so ran
The letter) 'you have not been here
of late.
You will not find me here. At last I
go
On that long-promised visit to the
North.
I told your wayside story to my mother
And Evelyn. She remembers you.
Farewell.
Pray come and see my mother. Al-
most blind
With ever-growing cataract, yet she
thinks
She sees you when she hears. Again
farewell.'

Cold words from one I had hoped
to warm so far
That I could stamp my image on her
heart!
'Pray come and see my mother, and
farewell.'
Cold, but as welcome as free airs of
heaven
After a dungeon's closeness. Selfish,
strange!
What dwarfs are men! my strangled
vanity
Utter'd a stifled cry—to have vext
myself
And all in vain for her—cold heart or
none—
No bride for me. Yet so my path
was clear
To win the sister.
Whom I woo'd and won.
For Evelyn knew not of my former
suit,
Because the simple mother work'd
upon
By Edith pray'd me not to whisper
of it.

And Edith would be bridesmaid on
the day.
But on that day, not being all at
ease,
I from the altar glancing back upon
her,
Before the first 'I will' was utter'd,
saw
The bridesmaid pale, statuelike, pas-
sionless—
'No harm, no harm' I turn'd again,
and placed
My ring upon the finger of my bride.

So, when we parted, Edith spoke no
word,
She wept no tear, but round my
Evelyn clung
In utter silence for so long, I thought
'What, will she never set her sister
free?'

We left her, happy each in each,
and then,
As tho' the happiness of each in each
Were not enough, must fain have tor-
rents, lakes,
Hills, the great things of Nature and
the fair,
To lift us as it were from common-
place,
And help us to our joy. Better have
sent
Our Edith thro' the glories of the
earth,
To change with her horizon, if true
Love
Were not his own imperial all-in-all.

Far off we went. My God, I would
not live
Save that I think this gross hard-
seeming world
Is our misshaping vision of the Powers
Behind the world, that make our griefs
our gains.

For on the dark night of our
marriage-day
The great Tragedian, that had
quench'd herself
In that assumption of the bridesmaid
—she

That loved me—our true Edith—her brain broke
With over-acting, till she rose and fled
Beneath a pitiless rush of Autumn rain
To the deaf church—to be let in—to pray
Before *that* altar—so I think; and there
They found her beating the hard Protestant doors.
She died and she was buried ere we knew.

I learnt it first. I had to speak. At once
The bright quick smile of Evelyn, that had sunn'd
The morning of our marriage, past away:
And on our home-return the daily want
Of Edith in the house, the garden, still
Haunted us like her ghost; and by and by,
Either from that necessity for talk
Which lives with blindness, or plain innocence
Of nature, or desire that her lost child
Should earn from both the praise of heroism,
The mother broke her promise to the dead,
And told the living daughter with what love
Edith had welcomed my brief wooing of her,
And all her sweet self-sacrifice and death.

Henceforth that mystic bond betwixt the twins—
Did I not tell you they were twins?—prevail'd
So far that no caress could win my wife
Back to that passionate answer of full heart
I had from her at first. Not that her love,
Tho' scarce as great as Edith's power of love,
Had lessen'd, but the mother's garrulous wail
For ever woke the unhappy Past again,
Till that dead bridesmaid, meant to be my bride,
Put forth cold hands between us, and I fear'd
The very fountains of her life were chill'd;
So took her thence, and brought her here, and here
She bore a child, whom reverently we call'd
Edith; and in the second year was born
A second—this I named from her own self,
Evelyn; then two weeks—no more—she joined,
In and beyond the grave, that one she loved.
Now in this quiet of declining life,
Thro' dreams by night and trances of the day,
The sisters glide about me hand in hand,
Both beautiful alike, nor can I tell
One from the other, no, nor care to tell
One from the other, only know they come,
They smile upon me, till, remembering all
The love they both have borne me, and the love
I bore them both—divided as I am
From either by the stillness of the grave—
I know not which of these I love the best.

But *you* love Edith; and her own true eyes
Are traitors to her; our quick Evelyn—
The merrier, prettier, wittier, as they talk,
And not without good reason, my good son—

Is yet untouch'd: and I that hold
them both
Dearest of all things—well, I am not
sure—
But if there lie a preference either-
way,
And in the rich vocabulary of Love
'Most dearest' be a true superlative—
I think *I* likewise love your Edith
most.

THE VILLAGE WIFE; OR, THE ENTAIL.[1]

I.

'OUSE-KEEPER sent tha my lass, fur
New Squire coom'd last night.
Butter an' heggs—yis—yis. I'll goä
wi' tha back: all right;
Butter I warrants be prime, an' I war-
rants the heggs be as well,
Hafe a pint o' milk runs out when ya
breäks the shell.

II.

Sit thysen down fur a bit: hev a glass
o' cowslip wine!
I liked the owd Squire an' 'is gells as
thaw they was gells o' mine,
Fur then we was all es one, the Squire
an' 'is darters an' me,
Hall but Miss Annie, the heldest, I
niver not took to she:
But Nelly, the last of the cletch,[2] I
liked 'er the fust on 'em all,
Fur hoffens we talkt o' my darter es
died o' the fever at fall:
An' I thowt 'twur the will o' the Lord,
but Miss Annie she said it wur
draäins,
Fur she hedn't naw coomfut in 'er, an'
arn'd naw thanks fur 'er paäins.
Eh! thebbe all wi' the Lord my
childer, I han't gotten none!
Sa new Squire's coom'd wi' 'is taäil in
'is 'and, an' owd Squire's gone.

III.

Fur 'staäte be i' taäil, my lass: tha
dosn' knaw what that be?
But I knaws the law, I does, for the
lawyer ha towd it me.
'When theer's naw 'eäd to a 'Ouse by
the fault o' that ere maäle—
The gells they counts fur nowt, and
the next un he taäkes the taäil.'

IV.

What be the next un like? can tha tell
ony harm on 'im lass?—
Naay sit down—naw 'urry—sa
cowd!—hev another glass!
Straänge an' cowd fur the time! we
may happen a fall o' snaw—
Not es I cares fur to hear ony harm,
but I likes to knaw.
An' I 'oäps es 'e beänt boo'klarn'd:
but 'e dosn' not coom fro' the
shere;
We'd anew o' that wi' the Squire, an'
we haätes boo'klarnin' ere.

V.

Fur Squire wur a Varsity scholard, an'
niver lookt arter the land—
Whoäts or tonups or taätes—'e 'ed
hallus a boo'k i' 'is 'and,
Hallus aloän wi' 'is boo'ks, thaw nigh
upo' seventy year.
An' boo'ks, what's boo'ks? thou
knaws thebbe naither 'ere nor
theer.

VI.

An' the gells, they hedn't naw taäils,
an' the lawyer he towd it me
That 'is taäil were soä tied up es he
couldn't cut down a tree!
'Drat the trees,' says I, to be sewer I
haätes 'em, my lass,
Fur we puts the muck o' the land an'
they sucks the muck fro' the
grass.

VII.

An' Squire wur hallus a-smilin', an'
gied to the tramps goin' by—

[1] See note to 'Northern Cobbler.'
[2] A brood of chickens.

An' all o' the wust i' the parish—wi' hoffens a drop in 'is eye.
An' ivry darter o' Squire's hed her awn ridin-erse to 'ersen,
An' they rampaged about wi' their grooms, an' was 'untin' arter the men,
An' hallus a-dallackt[1] an' dizen'd out, an' a-buyin' new cloäthes,
While 'e sit like a greät glimmergowk[2] wi' 'is glasses athurt 'is noäse,
An' 'is noäse sa grufted wi' snuff es it couldn't be scroob'd awaäy,
Fur atween 'is reädin' an' writin' 'e snifft up a box in a daäy,
An' 'e niver runn'd arter the fox, nor arter the birds wi' 'is gun,
An' 'e niver not shot one 'are, but 'e leäved it to Charlie 'is son,
An' 'e niver not fish'd 'is awn ponds, but Charlie 'e cotch'd the pike,
For 'e warn't not burn to the land, an' 'e didn't take kind to it like;
But I ears es 'e'd gie fur a howry[3] owd book thutty pound an' moor,
An' 'e'd wrote an owd book, his awn sen, sa I knaw'd es 'e'd coom to be poor;
An' 'e gied—I be fear'd fur to tell tha 'ow much—fur an owd scratted stoän,
An' 'e digg'd up a loomp i' the land an' 'e got a brown pot an' a boän,
An' 'e bowt owd money, es wouldn't goä, wi' good gowd o' the Queen,
An' 'e bowt little statutes all-naäkt an' which was a shaäme to be seen;
But 'e niver looökt ower a bill, nor 'e niver not seed to owt,
An' 'e niver knawd nowt but booäks, an' booäks, as thou knaws, beänt nowt.

VIII.

But owd Squire's laädy es long es she lived she kep 'em all clear,
Thaw es long es she lived I niver hed none of 'er darters 'ere;
But arter she died we was all es one, the childer an' me,
An' sarvints runn'd in an' out, an' offens we hed 'em to tea.
Lawk! 'ow I laugh'd when the lasses 'ud talk o' their Missis's waäys,
An' the Missisis talk'd o' the lasses. —I'll tell tha some o' these daäys.
Hoänly Miss Annie were saw stuck oop, like 'er mother afoor—
'Er an' 'er blessed darter—they niver derken'd my door.

IX.

An' Squire 'e smiled an' 'e smiled till 'e'd gotten a fright at last,
An' 'e calls fur 'is son, fur the 'turney's letters they foller'd sa fast;
But Squire wur afear'd o' 'is son, an' 'e says to 'im, meek as a mouse,
'Lad, thou mun cut off thy taäil, or the gells 'ull goä to the 'Ouse,
Fur I finds es I be that i' debt, es I 'oäps es thou'll 'elp me a bit,
An' if thou'll 'gree to cut off thy taäil I may saäve mysen yit.'

X.

But Charlie 'e sets back 'is ears, an' 'e sweärs, an' 'e says to 'im 'Noa. I've gotten the 'staäte by the taäil an' be dang'd if I iver let goa!
Coom! coom! feyther,' 'e says, 'why shouldn't thy booöks be sowd? I hears es soom o' thy booöks mebbe worth their weight i' gowd.'

XI.

Heäps an' heäps o' booöks, I ha' see'd 'em, belong'd to the Squire,
But the lasses 'ed teärd out leäves i' the middle to kindle the fire;
Sa moäst on 'is owd big booöks fetch'd nigh to nowt at the saäle,
And Squire were at Charlie ageän to git 'im to cut off 'is taäil.

XII.

Ya wouldn't find Charlie's likes—'e were that outdacious at 'oäm,

[1] Overdrest in gay colors. [2] Owl.
[3] Filthy.

Not thaw ya went fur to raäke out
Hell wi' a small-tooth coämb—
Droonk wi' the Quoloty's wine, an'
droonk wi' the farmer's aäle,
Mad wi' the lasses an' all—an' 'e
wouldn't cut off the taäil.

XIII.

Thou's coom'd oop by the beck; and
a thurn be a-grawin' theer,
I niver ha seed it sa white wi' the
Maäy es I see'd it to-year—
Theerabouts Charlie joompt—and it
gied me a scare tother night,
Fur I thowt it wur Charlie's ghoäst i'
the derk, fur it looökt sa white.
'Billy,' says 'e, 'hev a joomp!'—thaw
the banks o' the beck be sa high,
Fur he ca'd 'is 'erse Billy-rough-un,
thaw niver a hair wur awry;
But Billy fell bakkuds o' Charlie, an'
Charlie 'e brok 'is neck,
Sa theer wur a hend o' the taäil, fur
'e lost 'is taäil i' the beck.

XIV.

Sa 'is taäil wur lost an' 'is booöks wur
gone an' 'is boy wur deäd,
An' Squire 'e smiled an' 'e smiled, but
'e niver not lift oop 'is 'eäd:
Hallus a soft un Squire! an' 'e
smiled, fur 'e hedn't naw friend,
Sa feyther an' son was buried to-
gither, an' this wur the hend.

XV.

An' Parson as hesn't the call, nor the
mooney, but hes the pride,
'E reäds of a sewer an' sartan 'oäp o'
the tother side;
But I beänt that sewer es the Lord,
howsiver they praäy'd an'
praäy'd,
Lets them inter 'eaven eäsy es leäves
their debts to be paäid.
Siver the mou'ds rattled down upo'
poor owd Squire i' the wood,
An' I cried along wi' the gells, fur
they weänt niver coom to naw
good.

XVI.

Fur Molly the long un she walkt
awaäy wi' a hofficer lad,
An' nawbody 'eärd on 'er sin, sa o'
coorse she be gone to the bad!
An' Lucy wur laäme o' one leg, sweet-
'arts she niver 'ed none—
Straänge an' unheppen[1] Miss Lucy!
we naämed her 'Dot an' gaw
one!'
An' Hetty wur weak i' the hattics, wi'-
out ony harm i' the legs,
An' the fever 'ed baäked Jinny's 'eäd
as bald as one o' them heggs,
An' Nelly wur up fro' the craädle as
big i' the mouth as a cow,
An' saw she mun hammergrate,[2] lass,
or she weänt git a maäte ony-
how!
An' es for Miss Annie es call'd me
afoor my awn foälks to my faäce
'A hignorant village wife as 'ud hev
to be larn'd her awn plaäce,'
Hes fur Miss Hannie the heldest hes
now be a-grawin' sa howd,
I knaws that mooch o' sheä, es it
beänt not fit to be towd!

XVII.

Sa I didn't not taäke it kindly ov owd
Miss Annie to saäy
Es I should be talkin ageän 'em, es
soon es they went awaäy,
Fur, lawks! 'ow I cried when they
went, an' our Nelly she gied me
'er 'and,
Fur I'd ha done owt for the Squire
an' 'is gells es belong'd to the
land;
Booöks, es I said afoor, thebbe ney-
ther 'ere nor theer!
But I sarved 'em wi' butter an' heggs
fur huppuds o' twenty year.

XVIII.

An' they hallus paäid what I hax'd,
sa I hallus deal'd wi' the Hall,
An' they knaw'd what butter wur, an'
they knaw'd what a hegg wur
an' all;

[1] Ungainly, awkward. [2] Emigrate.

Hugger-mugger they lived, but they
wasn't that eäsy to pleäse,
Till I gied 'em Hinjian curn, an' they
laäid big heggs es tha seeas;
An' I niver puts saäme[1] i' *my* butter,
they does it at Willis's farm,
Taäste another drop o' the wine—
tweänt do tha naw harm.

XIX.

Sa new Squire's coom'd wi' 'is taäil in
'is 'and, an' owd Squire's gone;
I heard 'im a roomlin' by, but arter
my nightcap wur on;
Sa I han't clapt eyes on 'im yit, fur
he coom'd last night sa laäte—
Pluksh! ! ![2] the hens i' the peäs!
why didn't tha hesp the gaäte?

IN THE CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL.

EMMIE.

I.

Our doctor had call'd in another, I
never had seen him before,
But he sent a chill to my heart when I
saw him come in at the door,
Fresh from the surgery-schools of
France and of other lands—
Harsh red hair, big voice, big chest,
big merciless hands!
Wonderful cures he had done, O yes,
but they said too of him
He was happier using the knife than
in trying to save the limb,
And that I can well believe, for he
look'd so coarse and so red,
I could think he was one of those who
would break their jests on the
dead,
And mangle the living dog that had
loved him and fawn'd at his
knee—
Drench'd with the hellish oorali—
that ever such things should
be!

II.

Here was a boy—I am sure that some
of our children would die
But for the voice of Love, and the
smile, and the comforting eye—
Here was a boy in the ward, every
bone seem'd out of its place—
Caught in a mill and crush'd—it was
all but a hopeless case:
And he handled him gently enough;
but his voice and his face were
not kind,
And it was but a hopeless case, he
had seen it and made up his
mind,
And he said to me roughly 'The lad
will need little more of your
care.'
'All the more need,' I told him, 'to
seek the Lord Jesus in prayer;
They are all his children here, and I
pray for them all as my own:'
But he turn'd to me, 'Ay, good
woman, can prayer set a broken
bone?'
Then he mutter'd half to himself, but
I know that I heard him say
'All very well—but the good Lord
Jesus has had his day.'

III.

Had? has it come? It has only
dawn'd. It will come by and
by.
O how could I serve in the wards if
the hope of the world were a
lie?
How could I bear with the sights and
the loathsome smells of dis-
ease
But that He said 'Ye do it to me,
when ye do it to these'?

IV.

So he went. And we past to this
ward where the younger chil-
dren are laid:

[1] Lard.

[2] A cry accompanied by a clapping of hands to scare trespassing fowl.

Here is the cot of our orphan, our darling, our meek little maid;
Empty you see just now! We have lost her who loved her so much—
Patient of pain tho' as quick as a sensitive plant to the touch;
Hers was the prettiest prattle, it often moved me to tears,
Hers was the gratefullest heart I have found in a child of her years—
Nay you remember our Emmie; you used to send her the flowers;
How she would smile at 'em, play with 'em, talk to 'em hours after hours!
They that can wander at will where the works of the Lord are reveal'd
Little guess what joy can be got from a cowslip out of the field;
Flowers to these 'spirits in prison' are all they can know of the spring,
They freshen and sweeten the wards like the waft of an Angel's wing;
And she lay with a flower in one hand and her thin hands crost on her breast—
Wan, but as pretty as heart can desire, and we thought her at rest,
Quietly sleeping—so quiet, our doctor said 'Poor little dear,
Nurse, I must do it to-morrow; she'll never live thro' it, I fear.'

V.

I walk'd with our kindly old doctor as far as the head of the stair,
Then I return'd to the ward; the child didn't see I was there.

VI.

Never since I was nurse, had I been so grieved and so vext!
Emmie had heard him. Softly she call'd from her cot to the next,
'He says I shall never live thro' it, O Annie, what shall I do?'
Annie consider'd. 'If I,' said the wise little Annie, 'was you,
I should cry to the dear Lord Jesus to help me, for, Emmie, you see,
It's all in the picture there: "Little children should come to me."'
(Meaning the print that you gave us, I find that it always can please
Our children, the dear Lord Jesus with children about his knees.)
'Yes, and I will,' said Emmie, 'but then if I call to the Lord,
How should he know that it's me? such a lot of beds in the ward!'
That was a puzzle for Annie. Again she consider'd and said:
'Emmie, you put out your arms, and you leave 'em outside on the bed—
The Lord has so *much* to see to! but, Emmie, you tell it him plain,
It's the little girl with her arms lying out on the counterpane.'

VII.

I had sat three nights by the child—I could not watch her for four—
My brain had begun to reel—I felt I could do it no more.
That was my sleeping-night, but I thought that it never would pass.
There was a thunderclap once, and a clatter of hail on the glass,
And there was a phantom cry that I heard as I tost about,
The motherless bleat of a lamb in the storm and the darkness without;
My sleep was broken besides with dreams of the dreadful knife
And fears for our delicate Emmie who scarce would escape with her life;
Then in the gray of the morning it seem'd she stood by me and smiled,
And the doctor came at his hour, and we went to see the child.

"BUT KEEP THE SECRET FOR YOUR LIFE."—*Page 96.*

VIII.

He had brought his ghastly tools: we believed her asleep again—
Her dear, long, lean, little arms lying out on the counterpane;
Say that His day is done! Ah why should we care what they say?
The Lord of the children had heard her, and Emmie had past away.

DEDICATORY POEM TO THE PRINCESS ALICE.

DEAD PRINCESS, living Power, if that, which lived
True life, live on—and if the fatal kiss,
Born of true life and love, divorce thee not
From earthly love and life—if what we call
The spirit flash not all at once from out
This shadow into Substance—then perhaps
The mellow'd murmur of the people's praise
From thine own State, and all our breadth of realm,
Where Love and Longing dress thy deeds in light,
Ascends to thee; and this March morn that sees
Thy Soldier-brother's bridal orange-bloom
Break thro' the yews and cypress of thy grave,
And thine Imperial mother smile again,
May send one ray to thee! and who can tell—
Thou—England's England-loving daughter—thou
Dying so English thou wouldst have her flag
Borne on thy coffin—where is he can swear
But that some broken gleam from our poor earth
May touch thee, while remembering thee, I lay
At thy pale feet this ballad of the deeds
Of England, and her banner in the East?

THE DEFENCE OF LUCKNOW.

I.

BANNER of England, not for a season,
O banner of Britain, hast thou
Floated in conquering battle or flapt to the battle-cry!
Never with mightier glory than when we had rear'd thee on high
Flying at top of the roofs in the ghastly siege of Lucknow—
Shot thro' the staff or the halyard, but ever we raised thee anew,
And ever upon the topmost roof our banner of England blew.

II.

Frail were the works that defended the hold that we held with our lives—
Women and children among us, God help them, our children and wives!
Hold it we might—and for fifteen days or for twenty at most.
'Never surrender, I charge you, but every man die at his post!'
Voice of the dead whom we loved, our Lawrence the best of the brave:
Cold were his brows when we kiss'd him—we laid him that night in his grave.
'Every man die at his post!' and there hail'd on our houses and halls
Death from their rifle-bullets, and death from their cannon-balls,
Death in our innermost chamber, and death at our slight barricade,
Death while we stood with the musket, and death while we stoopt to the spade,

Death to the dying, and wounds to the wounded, for often there fell,
Striking the hospital wall, crashing thro' it, their shot and their shell,
Death—for their spies were among us, their marksmen were told of our best,
So that the brute bullet broke thro' the brain that could think for the rest;
Bullets would sing by our foreheads, and bullets would rain at our feet—
Fire from ten thousand at once of the rebels that girdled us round—
Death at the glimpse of a finger from over the breadth of a street,
Death from the heights of the mosque and the palace, and death in the ground!
Mine? yes, a mine! Countermine! down, down! and creep thro' the hold!
Keep the revolver in hand! you can hear him—the murderous mole!
Quiet, ah! quiet—wait till the point of the pickaxe be thro'!
Click with the pick, coming nearer and nearer again than before—
Now let it speak, and you fire, and the dark pioneer is no more;
And ever upon the topmost roof our banner of England blew!

III.

Ay, but the foe sprung his mine many times, and it chanced on a day
Soon as the blast of that underground thunderclap echo'd away,
Dark thro' the smoke and the sulphur like so many fiends in their hell—
Cannon-shot, musket-shot, volley on volley, and yell upon yell—
Fiercely on all the defences our myriad enemy fell.
What have they done? where is it? Out yonder. Guard the Redan!
Storm at the Water-gate! storm at the Bailey-gate! storm, and it ran
Surging and swaying all round us, as ocean on every side
Plunges and heaves at a bank that is daily devour'd by the tide—
So many thousands that if they be bold enough, who shall escape?
Kill or be kill'd, live or die, they shall know we are soldiers and men!
Ready! take aim at their leaders—their masses are gapp'd with our grape—
Backward they reel like the wave, like the wave flinging forward again,
Flying and foil'd at the last by the handful they could not subdue;
And ever upon the topmost roof our banner of England blew.

IV.

Handful of men as we were, we were English in heart and in limb,
Strong with the strength of the race to command, to obey, to endure,
Each of us fought as if hope for the garrison hung but on him;
Still—could we watch at all points? we were every day fewer and fewer.
There was a whisper among us, but only a whisper that past:
'Children and wives—if the tigers leap into the fold unawares—
Every man die at his post—and the foe may outlive us at last—
Better to fall by the hands that they love, than to fall into theirs!'
Roar upon roar in a moment two mines by the enemy sprung
Clove into perilous chasms our walls and our poor palisades.
Rifleman, true is your heart, but be sure that your hand be as true!
Sharp is the fire of assault, better aimed are your flank fusillades—
Twice do we hurl them to earth from the ladders to which they had clung,
Twice from the ditch where they shelter we drive them with hand-grenades;
And ever upon the topmost roof our banner of England blew.

V.

Then on another wild morning another wild earthquake out-tore
Clean from our lines of defence ten or twelve good paces or more.
Rifleman, high on the roof, hidden there from the light of the sun—
One has leapt up on the breach, crying out: 'Follow me, follow me!'—
Mark him—he falls! then another, and *him* too, and down goes he.
Had they been bold enough then, who can tell but the traitors had won?
Boardings and rafters and doors—an embrasure! make way for the gun!
Now double-charge it with grape! It is charged and we fire, and they run.
Praise to our Indian brothers, and let the dark face have his due!
Thanks to the kindly dark faces who fought with us, faithful and few,
Fought with the bravest among us, and drove them, and smote them, and slew,
That ever upon the topmost roof our banner in India blew.

VI.

Men will forget what we suffer and not what we do. We can fight!
But to be soldier all day and be sentinel all thro' the night—
Ever the mine and assault, our sallies, their lying alarms,
Bugles and drums in the darkness, and shoutings and soundings to arms,
Ever the labor of fifty that had to be done by five,
Ever the marvel among us that one should be left alive,
Ever the day with its traitorous death from the loopholes around,
Ever the night with its coffinless corpse to be laid in the ground,
Heat like the mouth of a hell, or a deluge of cataract skies,
Stench of old offal decaying, and infinite torment of flies,
Thoughts of the breezes of May blowing over an English field,
Cholera, scurvy, and fever, the wound that *would* not be heal'd,
Lopping away of the limb by the pitiful-pitiless knife,—
Torture and trouble in vain,—for it never could save us a life.
Valor of delicate women who tended the hospital bed,
Horror of women in travail among the dying and dead,
Grief for our perishing children, and never a moment for grief,
Toil and ineffable weariness, faltering hopes of relief,
Havelock baffled, or beaten, or butcher'd for all that we knew—
Then day and night, day and night, coming down on the still-shatter'd walls
Millions of musket-bullets, and thousands of cannon-balls—
But ever upon the topmost roof our banner of England blew.

VII.

Hark cannonade, fusillade! is it true what was told by the scout,
Outram and Havelock breaking their way through the fell mutineers?
Surely the pibroch of Europe is ringing again in our ears!
All on a sudden the garrison utter a jubilant shout,
Havelock's glorious Highlanders answer with conquering cheers,
Sick from the hospital echo them, women and children come out,
Blessing the wholesome white faces of Havelock's good fusileers,
Kissing the war-harden'd hand of the Highlander wet with their tears!
Dance to the pibroch!—saved! we are saved!—is it you? is it you?
Saved by the valor of Havelock, saved by the blessing of Heaven!

'Hold it for fifteen days!' we have held it for eighty-seven!
And ever aloft on the palace roof the old banner of England blew.

SIR JOHN OLDCASTLE, LORD COBHAM.

(IN WALES.)

My friend should meet me somewhere hereabout
To take me to that hiding in the hills.

I have broke their cage, no gilded one, I trow—
I read no more the prisoner's mute wail
Scribbled or carved upon the pitiless stone;
I find hard rocks, hard life, hard cheer, or none,
For I am emptier than a friar's brains;
But God is with me in this wilderness,
These wet black passes and foam-churning chasms—
And God's free air, and hope of better things.

I would I knew their speech; not now to glean,
Not now—I hope to do it—some scatter'd ears,
Some ears for Christ in this wild field of Wales—
But, bread, merely for bread. This tongue that wagg'd
They said with such heretical arrogance
Against the proud archbishop Arundel—
So much God's cause was fluent in it—is here
But as a Latin Bible to the crowd;
'Bara!'—what use? The Shepherd, when I speak,
Vailing a sudden eyelid with his hard
'Dim Saesneg' passes, wroth at things of old—
No fault of mine. Had he God's word in Welsh
He might be kindlier: happily come the day!

Not least art thou, thou little Bethlehem
In Judah, for in thee the Lord was born;
Nor thou in Britain, little Lutterworth,
Least, for in thee the word was born again.

Heaven-sweet Evangel, ever-living word,
Who whilome spakest to the South in Greek
About the soft Mediterranean shores,
And then in Latin to the Latin crowd,
As good need was—thou hast come to talk our isle.
Hereafter thou, fulfilling Pentecost,
Must learn to use the tongues of all the world.
Yet art thou thine own witness that thou bringest,
Not peace, a sword, a fire.
What did he say,
My frighted Wiclif-preacher whom I crost
In flying hither? that one night a crowd
Throng'd the waste field about the city gates:
The king was on them suddenly with a host.
Why there? they came to hear their preacher. Then
Some cried on Cobham, on the good Lord Cobham;
Ay, for they love me! but the king—nor voice
Nor finger raised against him—took and hang'd,
Took, hang'd and burnt—how many—thirty-nine—
Call'd it rebellion—hang'd, poor friends, as rebels
And burn'd alive as heretics! for your Priest
Labels—to take the king along with him—

All heresy, treason: but to call men traitors
May make men traitors.
Rose of Lancaster,
Red in thy birth, redder with household war,
Now reddest with the blood of holy men,
Redder to be, red rose of Lancaster—
If somewhere in the North, as Rumor sang
Fluttering the hawks of this crown-lusting line—
By firth and loch thy silver sister grow,[1]
That were my rose, there my allegiance due.
Self-starved, they say—nay, murder'd, doubtless dead.
So to this king I cleaved: my friend was he,
Once my fast friend: I would have given my life
To help his own from scathe, a thousand lives
To save his soul. He might have come to learn
Our Wiclif's learning: but the worldly Priests
Who fear the king's hard common-sense should find
What rotten piles uphold their mason-work,
Urge him to foreign war. O had he will'd
I might have stricken a lusty stroke for him,
But he would not; far liever led my friend
Back to the pure and universal church,
But he would not: whether that heirless flaw
In his throne's title make him feel so frail,
He leans on Antichrist; or that his mind,
So quick, so capable in soldiership,
In matters of the faith, alas the while!
More worth than all the kingdoms of this world,
Runs in the rut, a coward to the Priest.

[1] Richard II.

Burnt—good Sir Roger Acton, my dear friend!
Burnt too, my faithful preacher, Beverley!
Lord give thou power to thy two witnesses!
Lest the false faith make merry over them!
Two—nay but thirty-nine have risen and stand,
Dark with the smoke of human sacrifice,
Before thy light, and cry continually—
Cry—against whom?
Him, who should bear the sword
Of Justice—what! the kingly, kindly boy;
Who took the world so easily heretofore,
My boon companion, tavern-fellow—him
Who gibed and japed—in many a merry tale
That shook our sides—at Pardoners, Summoners,
Friars, absolution-sellers, monkeries
And nunneries, when the wild hour and the wine
Had set the wits aflame.
Harry of Monmouth,
Or Amurath of the East?
Better to sink
Thy fleurs-de-lys in slime again, and fling
Thy royalty back into the riotous fits
Of wine and harlotry—thy shame, and mine,
Thy comrade—than to persecute the Lord,
And play the Saul that never will be Paul.

Burnt, burnt! and while this mitred Arundel
Dooms our unlicensed preacher to the flame,
The mitre-sanction'd harlot draws his clerks
Into the suburb—their hard celibacy,
Sworn to be veriest ice of pureness, molten
Into adulterous living, or such crime

As holy Paul—a shame to speak of them—
Among the heathen—
Sanctuary granted
To bandit, thief, assassin—yea to him
Who hacks his mother's throat—denied to him,
Who finds the Saviour in his mother tongue.
The Gospel, the Priest's pearl, flung down to swine—
The swine, lay-men, lay-women, who will come,
God willing, to outlearn the filthy friar.
Ah rather, Lord, than that thy Gospel, meant
To course and range thro' all the world, should be
Tether'd to these dead pillars of the Church—
Rather than so, if thou wilt have it so,
Burst vein, snap sinew, and crack heart, and life
Pass in the fire of Babylon! but how long,
O Lord, how long!
My friend should meet me here.
Here is the copse, the fountain and—a Cross!
To thee, dead wood, I bow not head nor knees.
Rather to thee, green boscage, work of God,
Black holly, and white-flower'd wayfaring tree!
Rather to thee, thou living water, drawn
By this good Wiclif mountain down from heaven,
And speaking clearly in thy native tongue—
No Latin—He that thirsteth, come and drink!

Eh! how I anger'd Arundel asking me
To worship Holy Cross! I spread mine arms,
God's work, I said, a cross of flesh and blood
And holier. That was heresy. (My good friend
By this time should be with me.) 'Images?'
'Bury them as God's truer images
Are daily buried.' 'Heresy.—Penance?' 'Fast,
Hairshirt and scourge—nay, let a man repent,
Do penance in his heart, God hears him.' 'Heresy—
Not shriven, not saved?' 'What profits an ill Priest
Between me and my God? I would not spurn
Good counsel of good friends, but shrive myself
No, not to an Apostle.' 'Heresy.'
(My friend is long in coming.) 'Pilgrimages?'
'Drink, bagpipes, revelling, devil's-dances, vice.
The poor man's money gone to fat the friar.
Who reads of begging saints in Scripture?'—'Heresy'—
(Hath he been here—not found me—gone again?
Have I mislearnt our place of meeting?) 'Bread—
Bread left after the blessing?' how they stared
That was their main test-question—glared at me!
'He veil'd Himself in flesh, and now He veils
His flesh in bread, body and bread together.'
Then rose the howl of all the cassock'd wolves,
'No bread, no bread. God's body!' Archbishop, Bishop,
Priors, Canons, Friars, bellringers, Parish-clerks—
'No bread, no bread!'—'Authority of the Church,
Power of the keys!'—Then I, God help me, I
So mock'd, so spurn'd, so baited two whole days—
I lost myself and fell from evenness,
And rail'd at all the Popes, that ever since
Sylvester shed the venom of world-wealth

Into the church, had only prov'n themselves
Poisoners, murderers. Well—God pardon all—
Me, them, and all the world—yea, that proud Priest,
That mock-meek mouth of utter Antichrist,
That traitor to King Richard and the truth,
Who rose and doom'd me to the fire.
Amen!
Nay, I can burn, so that the Lord of life
Be by me in my death.
Those three! the fourth
Was like the Son of God! Not burnt were they.
On *them* the smell of burning had not past.
That was a miracle to convert the king.
These Pharisees, this Caiaphas-Arundel
What miracle could turn? *He* here again,
He thwarting their traditions of Himself,
He would be found a heretic to Himself,
And doom'd to burn alive.
So, caught, I burn.
Burn? heathen men have borne as much as this,
For freedom, or the sake of those they loved,
Or some less cause, some cause far less than mine;
For every other cause is less than mine.
The moth will singe her wings, and singed return,
Her love of light quenching her fear of pain—
How now, my soul, we do not heed the fire?
Faint-hearted? tut!—faint-stomach'd! faint as I am,
God willing, I will burn for Him.
Who comes?
A thousand marks are set upon my head.
Friend?—foe perhaps—a tussle for it then
Nay, but my friend. Thou art so well disguised,
I knew thee not. Hast thou brought bread with thee?
I have not broken bread for fifty hours.
None? I am damn'd already by the Priest
For holding there was bread where bread was none—
No bread. My friends await me yonder? Yes.
Lead on then. *Up* the mountain? Is it far?
Not far. Climb first and reach me down thy hand.
I am not like to die for lack of bread,
For I must live to testify by fire.[1]

COLUMBUS.

CHAINS, my good lord: in your raised brows I read
Some wonder at our chamber ornaments.
We brought this iron from our isles of gold.

Does the king know you deign to visit him
Whom once he rose from off his throne to greet
Before his people, like his brother king?
I saw your face that morning in the crowd.

At Barcelona—tho' you were not then
So bearded. Yes. The city deck'd herself
To meet me, roar'd my name; the king, the queen
Bad me be seated, speak, and tell them all
The story of my voyage, and while I spoke
The crowd's roar fell as at the 'Peace, be still!'

[1] He was burnt on Christmas Day, 1417.

And when I ceased to speak, the king, the queen,
Sank from their thrones, and melted into tears,
And knelt, and lifted hand and heart and voice
In praise to God who led me thro' the waste.
And then the great 'Laudamus' rose to heaven.

Chains for the Admiral of the Ocean! chains
For him who gave a new heaven, a new earth,
As holy John had prophesied of me,
Gave glory and more empire to the kings
Of Spain than all their battles! chains for him
Who push'd his prows into the setting sun,
And made West East, and sail'd the Dragon's mouth,
And came upon the Mountain of the World,
And saw the rivers roll from Paradise!

Chains! we are Admirals of the Ocean, we,
We and our sons for ever. Ferdinand
Hath sign'd it and our Holy Catholic queen—
Of the Ocean—of the Indies—Admirals we—
Our title, which we never mean to yield,
Our guerdon not alone for what we did,
But our amends for all we might have done—
The vast occasion of our stronger life—
Eighteen long years of waste, seven in your Spain,
Lost, showing courts and kings a truth the babe
Will suck in with his milk hereafter—earth
A sphere.

Were *you* at Salamanca? No.
We fronted there the learning of all Spain,
All their cosmogonies, their astronomies:
Guess-work *they* guess'd it, but the golden guess
Is morning-star to the full round of truth.
No guess-work! I was certain of my goal;
Some thought it heresy, but that would not hold.
King David call'd the heavens a hide, a tent
Spread over earth, and so this earth was flat:
Some cited old Lactantius: could it be
That trees grew downward, rain fell upward, men
Walk'd like the fly on ceilings? and besides,
The great Augustine wrote that none could breathe
Within the zone of heat; so might there be
Two Adams, two mankinds, and that was clean
Against God's word: thus was I beaten back,
And chiefly to my sorrow by the Church,
And thought to turn my face from Spain, appeal
Once more to France or England; but our Queen
Recall'd me, for at last their Highnesses
Were half-assured this earth might be a sphere.

All glory to the all-blessed Trinity,
All glory to the mother of our Lord,
And Holy Church, from whom I never swerved
Not even by one hair's-breadth of heresy,
I have accomplish'd what I came to do.

Not yet—not all—last night a dream—I sail'd

On my first voyage, harass'd by the frights
Of my first crew, their curses and their groans.
The great flame-banner borne by Teneriffe,
The compass, like an old friend false at last
In our most need, appall'd them, and the wind
Still westward, and the weedy seas—at length
The landbird, and the branch with berries on it,
The carven staff—and last the light, the light
On Guanahani! but I changed the name;
San Salvador I call'd it; and the light
Grew as I gazed, and brought out a broad sky
Of dawning over—not those alien palms,
The marvel of that fair new nature—not
That Indian isle, but our most ancient East
Moriah with Jerusalem; and I saw
The glory of the Lord flash up, and beat
Thro' all the homely town from jasper, sapphire,
Chalcedony, emerald, sardonyx, sardius,
Chrysolite, beryl, topaz, chrysoprase,
Jacynth, and amethyst—and those twelve gates,
Pearl—and I woke, and thought—death—I shall die—
I am written in the Lamb's own Book of Life
To walk within the glory of the Lord
Sunless and moonless, utter light—but no!
The Lord had sent this bright, strange dream to me
To mind me of the secret vow I made
When Spain was waging war against the Moor—
I strove myself with Spain against the Moor.
There came two voices from the Sepulchre,
Two friars crying that if Spain should oust
The Moslem from her limit, he, the fierce
Soldan of Egypt, would break down and raze
The blessed tomb of Christ; whereon I vow'd
That, if our Princes harken'd to my prayer,
Whatever wealth I brought from that new world
Should, in this old, be consecrate to lead
A new crusade against the Saracen,
And free the Holy Sepulchre from thrall.

Gold? I had brought your Princes gold enough
If left alone! Being but a Genovese,
I am handled worse than had I been a Moor,
And breach'd the belting wall of Cambalu,
And given the Great Khan's palaces to the Moor,
Or clutch'd the sacred crown of Prester John,
And cast it to the Moor: but *had* I brought
From Solomon's now-recover'd Ophir all
The gold that Solomon's navies carried home,
Would that have gilded *me?* Blue blood of Spain,
Tho' quartering your own royal arms of Spain,
I have not: blue blood and black blood of Spain,
The noble and the convict of Castile,
Howl'd me from Hispaniola; for you know
The flies at home, that ever swarm about
And cloud the highest heads, and murmur down
Truth in the distance—these outbuzz'd me so

That even our prudent king, our righteous queen—
I pray'd them being so calumniated
They would commission one of weight and worth
To judge between my slander'd self and me—
Fonseca my main enemy at their court,
They sent me out *his* tool, Bovadilla, one
As ignorant and impolitic as a beast—
Blockish irreverence, brainless greed —who sack'd
My dwelling, seized upon my papers, loosed
My captives, feed the rebels of the crown,
Sold the crown-farms for all but nothing, gave
All but free leave for all to work the mines,
Drove me and my good brothers home in chains,
And gathering ruthless gold—a single piece
Weigh'd nigh four thousand Castillanos—so
They tell me—weigh'd him down into the abysm—
The hurricane of the latitude on him fell,
The seas of our discovering over-roll
Him and his gold; the frailer caravel,
With what was mine, came happily to the shore.
There was a glimmering of God's hand.

And God
Hath more than glimmer'd on me. O my lord,
I swear to you I heard his voice between
The thunders in the black Veragua nights,
'O soul of little faith, slow to believe!
Have I not been about thee from thy birth?
Given thee the keys of the great Ocean-sea?
Set thee in light till time shall be no more?
Is it I who have deceived thee or the world?
Endure! thou hast done so well for men, that men
Cry out against thee: was it otherwise
With mine own Son?'

And more than once in days
Of doubt and cloud and storm, when drowning hope
Sank all but out of sight, I heard his voice,
'Be not cast down. I lead thee by the hand,
Fear not.' And I shall hear his voice again—
I know that he has led me all my life,
I am not yet too old to work his will—
His voice again.

Still for all that, my lord,
I lying here bedridden and alone,
Cast off, put by, scouted by court and king—
The first discoverer starves—his followers, all
Flower into fortune—our world's way —and I,
Without a roof that I can call mine own,
With scarce a coin to buy a meal withal,
And seeing what a door for scoundrel scum
I open'd to the West, thro' which the lust,
Villany, violence, avarice, of your Spain
Pour'd in on all those happy naked isles—
Their kindly native princes slain or slaved,
Their wives and children Spanish concubines,
Their innocent hospitalities quench'd in blood,
Some dead of hunger, some beneath the scourge,
Some over-labor'd, some by their own hands,—
Yea, the dear mothers, crazing Nature, kill

Their babies at the breast for hate of Spain—
Ah God, the harmless people whom we found
In Hispaniola's island-Paradise!
Who took us for the very Gods from Heaven,
And we have sent them very fiends from Hell;
And I myself, myself not blameless, I
Could sometimes wish I had never led the way.

Only the ghost of our great Catholic Queen
Smiles on me, saying, 'Be thou comforted!
This creedless people will be brought to Christ
And own the holy governance of Rome.'

But who could dream that we, who bore the Cross
Thither, were excommunicated there,
For curbing crimes that scandalized the Cross,
By him, the Catalonian Minorite,
Rome's Vicar in our Indies? who believe
These hard memorials of our truth to Spain
Clung closer to us for a longer term
Than any friend of ours at Court? and yet
Pardon—too harsh, unjust. I am rack'd with pains.

You see that I have hung them by my bed,
And I will have them buried in my grave.

Sir, in that flight of ages which are God's
Own voice to justify the dead—perchance
Spain once the most chivalric race on earth,
Spain then the mightiest, wealthiest realm on earth,
So made by me, may seek to unbury me,
To lay me in some shrine of this old Spain,
Or in that vaster Spain I leave to Spain.
Then some one standing by my grave will say,
'Behold the bones of Christopher Colòn'—
'Ay, but the chains, what do *they* mean—the chains?'—
I sorrow for that kindly child of Spain
Who then will have to answer, 'These same chains
Bound these same bones back thro' the Atlantic sea,
Which he unchain'd for all the world to come.'

O Queen of Heaven who seest the souls in Hell
And purgatory, I suffer all as much
As they do—for the moment. Stay, my son
Is here anon: my son will speak for me
Ablier than I can in these spasms that grind
Bone against bone. You will not. One last word.

You move about the Court, I pray you tell
King Ferdinand who plays with me, that one,
Whose life has been no play with him and his
Hidalgos—shipwrecks, famines, fevers, fights,
Mutinies, treacheries—wink'd at, and condoned—
That I am loyal to him till the death,
And ready—tho' our Holy Catholic Queen,
Who fain had pledged her jewels on my first voyage,
Whose hope was mine to spread the Catholic faith,
Who wept with me when I return'd in chains,
Who sits beside the blessed Virgin now,
To whom I send my prayer by night and day—

She is gone—but you will tell the King, that I,
Rack'd as I am with gout, and wrench'd with pains
Gain'd in the service of His Highness, yet
Am ready to sail forth on one last voyage,
And readier, if the King would hear, to lead
One last crusade against the Saracen,
And save the Holy Sepulchre from thrall.

Going? I am old and slighted: you have dared
Somewhat perhaps in coming? my poor thanks!
I am but an alien and a Genovese.

THE VOYAGE OF MAELDUNE.

(FOUNDED ON AN IRISH LEGEND. A. D. 700.)

I.

I WAS the chief of the race—he had stricken my father dead—
But I gather'd my fellows together, I swore I would strike off his head.
Each of them look'd like a king, and was noble in birth as in worth,
And each of them boasted he sprang from the oldest race upon earth.
Each was as brave in the fight as the bravest hero of song,
And each of them liefer had died than have done one another a wrong.
He lived on an isle in the ocean—we sail'd on a Friday morn—
He that had slain my father the day before I was born.

II.

And we came to the isle in the ocean, and there on the shore was he.
But a sudden blast blew us out and away thro' a boundless sea.

III.

And we came to the Silent Isle that we never had touch'd at before,
Where a silent ocean always broke on a silent shore,
And the brooks glitter'd on in the light without sound, and the long waterfalls
Pour'd in a thunderless plunge to the base of the mountain walls,
And the poplar and cypress unshaken by storm flourish'd up beyond sight,
And the pine shot aloft from the crag to an unbelievable height,
And high in the heaven above it there flicker'd a songless lark,
And the cock couldn't crow, and the bull couldn't low, and the dog couldn't bark.
And round it we went, and thro' it, but never a murmur, a breath—
It was all of it fair as life, it was all of it quiet as death,
And we hated the beautiful Isle, for whenever we strove to speak
Our voices were thinner and fainter than any flittermouse-shriek;
And the men that were mighty of tongue and could raise such a battle-cry
That a hundred who heard it would rush on a thousand lances and die—
O they to be dumb'd by the charm!—so fluster'd with anger were they
They almost fell on each other; but after we sail'd away.

IV.

And we came to the Isle of Shouting, we landed, a score of wild birds
Cried from the topmost summit with human voices and words;
Once in an hour they cried, and whenever their voices peal'd
The steer fell down at the plow and the harvest died from the field,
And the men dropt dead in the valleys and half of the cattle went lame,

And the roof sank in on the hearth,
and the dwelling broke into
flame;
And the shouting of these wild birds
ran into the hearts of my
crew,
Till they shouted along with the
shouting and seized one another
and slew;
But I drew them the one from the
other; I saw that we could not
stay,
And we left the dead to the birds and
we sail'd with our wounded
away.

V.

And we came to the Isle of Flowers:
their breath met us out on the
seas,
For the Spring and the middle Sum-
mer sat each on the lap of the
breeze;
And the red passion-flower to the
cliffs, and the dark-blue clema-
tis, clung,
And starr'd with a myriad blossom
the long convolvulus hung;
And the topmost spire of the mountain
was lilies in lieu of snow,
And the lilies like glaciers winded
down, running out below
Thro' the fire of the tulip and poppy,
the blaze of gorse, and the
blush
Of millions of roses that sprang
without leaf or a thorn from
the bush;
And the whole isle-side flashing down
from the peak without ever a
tree
Swept like a torrent of gems from the
sky to the blue of the sea;
And we roll'd upon capes of crocus
and vaunted our kith and our
kin,
And we wallow'd in beds of lilies, and
chanted the triumph of Finn,
Till each like a golden image was
pollen'd from head to feet
And each was as dry as a cricket, with
thirst in the middle-day heat.
Blossom and blossom, and promise of
blossom, but never a fruit!
And we hated the Flowering Isle, as
we hated the isle that was
mute,
And we tore up the flowers by the
million and flung them in bight
and bay,
And we left but a naked rock, and in
anger we sail'd away.

VI.

And we came to the Isle of Fruits:
all round from the cliffs and
the capes,
Purple or amber, dangled a hundred
fathom of grapes,
And the warm melon lay like a little
sun on the tawny sand,
And the fig ran up from the beach
and rioted over the land,
And the mountain arose like a jewell'd
throne thro' the fragrant air,
Glowing with all-color'd plums and
with golden masses of pear,
And the crimson and scarlet of berries
that flamed upon bine and
vine,
But in every berry and fruit was the
poisonous pleasure of wine;
And the peak of the mountain was
apples, the hugest that ever
were seen,
And they prest, as they grew, on each
other, with hardly a leaflet
between,
And all of them redder than rosiest
health or than utterest shame,
And setting, when Even descended,
the very sunset aflame;
And we stay'd three days, and we
gorged and we madden'd, till
every one drew
His sword on his fellow to slay him,
and ever they struck and they
slew;
And myself, I had eaten but sparely,
and fought till I sunder'd the
fray,
Then I bad them remember my fath-
er's death, and we sail'd
away.

VII.

And we came to the Isle of Fire: we were lured by the light from afar,
For the peak sent up one league of fire to the Northern Star;
Lured by the glare and the blare, but scarcely could stand upright,
For the whole isle shudder'd and shook like a man in a mortal affright;
We were giddy besides with the fruits we had gorged, and so crazed that at last
There were some leap'd into the fire; and away we sail'd, and we past
Over that undersea isle, where the water is clearer than air:
Down we look'd: what a garden! O bliss, what a Paradise there!
Towers of a happier time, low down in a rainbow deep
Silent palaces, quiet fields of eternal sleep!
And three of the gentlest and best of my people, whate'er I could say,
Plunged head down in the sea, and the Paradise trembled away.

VIII.

And we came to the Bounteous Isle, where the heavens lean low on the land,
And ever at dawn from the cloud glitter'd o'er us a sunbright hand,
Then it open'd and dropt at the side of each man, as he rose from his rest,
Bread enough for his need till the laborless day dipt under the West;
And we wander'd about it and thro' it. O never was time so good!
And we sang of the triumphs of Finn, and the boast of our ancient blood,
And we gazed at the wandering wave as we sat by the gurgle of springs,
And we chanted the songs of the Bards and the glories of fairy kings;
But at length we began to be weary, to sigh, and to stretch and yawn,
Till we hated the Bounteous Isle and the sunbright hand of the dawn,
For there was not an enemy near, but the whole green Isle was our own,
And we took to playing at ball, and we took to throwing the stone,
And we took to playing at battle, but that was a perilous play,
For the passion of battle was in us, we slew and we sail'd away.

IX.

And we past to the Isle of Witches and heard their musical cry—
'Come to us, O come, come' in the stormy red of a sky
Dashing the fires and the shadows of dawn on the beautiful shapes,
For a wild witch naked as heaven stood on each of the loftiest capes,
And a hundred ranged on the rock like white sea-birds in a row,
And a hundred gamboll'd and pranced on the wrecks in the sand below,
And a hundred splash'd from the ledges, and bosom'd the burst of the spray,
But I knew we should fall on each other, and hastily sail'd away.

X.

And we came in an evil time to the Isle of the Double Towers,
One was of smooth-cut stone, one carved all over with flowers,
But an earthquake always moved in the hollows under the dells,
And they shock'd on each other and butted each other with clashing of bells,
And the daws flew out of the Towers and jangled and wrangled in vain,

And the clash and boom of the bells rang into the heart and the brain,
Till the passion of battle was on us, and all took sides with the Towers,
There were some for the clean-cut stone, there were more for the carven flowers,
And the wrathful thunder of God peal'd over us all the day,
For the one half slew the other, and after we sail'd away.

XI.

And we came to the Isle of a Saint who had sail'd with St. Brendan of yore,
He had lived ever since on the Isle and his winters were fifteen score,
And his voice was low as from other worlds, and his eyes were sweet,
And his white hair sank to his heels and his white beard fell to his feet,
And he spake to me, 'O Maeldune, let be this purpose of thine!
Remember the words of the Lord when he told us "Vengeance is mine!"
His fathers have slain thy fathers in war or in single strife,
Thy fathers have slain his fathers, each taken a life for a life,
Thy father had slain his father, how long shall the murder last?
Go back to the Isle of Finn and suffer the Past to be Past.'
And we kiss'd the fringe of his beard and we pray'd as we heard him pray,
And the Holy man he assoil'd us, and sadly we sail'd away.

XII.

And we came to the Isle we were blown from, and there on the shore was he,
The man that had slain my father. I saw him and let him be.
O weary was I of the travel, the trouble, the strife and the sin,
When I landed again, with a tithe of my men, on the Isle of Finn.

DE PROFUNDIS:

THE TWO GREETINGS.

I.

OUT of the deep, my child, out of the deep,
Where all that was to be, in all that was,
Whirl'd for a million æons thro' the vast
Waste dawn of multitudinous-eddying light—
Out of the deep, my child, out of the deep,
Thro' all this changing world of changeless law,
And every phase of ever-heightening life,
And nine long months of antenatal gloom,
With this last moon, this crescent—her dark orb
Touch'd with earth's light—thou comest, darling boy;
Our own; a babe in lineament and limb
Perfect, and prophet of the perfect man;
Whose face and form are hers and mine in one,
Indissolubly married like our love;
Live, and be happy in thyself, and serve
This mortal race thy kin so well, that men
May bless thee as we bless thee, O young life
Breaking with laughter from the dark; and may
The fated channel where thy motion lives
Be prosperously shaped, and sway thy course

Along the years of haste and random youth
Unshatter'd; then full-current thro' full man;
And last in kindly curves, with gentlest fall,
By quiet fields, a slowly-dying power,
To that last deep where we and thou are still.

II.

I.

OUT of the deep, my child, out of the deep,
From that great deep, before our world begins,
Whereon the Spirit of God moves as he will—
Out of the deep, my child, out of the deep,
From that true world within the world we see,
Whereof our world is but the bounding shore—
Out of the deep, Spirit, out of the deep,
With this ninth moon, that sends the hidden sun
Down yon dark sea, thou comest, darling boy.

II.

For in the world, which is not ours,
They said
'Let us make man' and that which should be man,
From that one light no man can look upon,
Drew to this shore lit by the suns and moons
And all the shadows. O dear Spirit half-lost
In thine own shadow and this fleshly sign
That thou art thou—who wailest being born
And banish'd into mystery, and the pain
Of this divisible-indivisible world
Among the numerable innumerable
Sun, sun, and sun, thro' finite-infinite space
In finite-infinite Time—our mortal veil
And shatter'd phantom of that infinite One,
Who made thee unconceivably Thyself
Out of His whole World-self and all in all—
Live thou! and of the grain and husk, the grape
And ivyberry, choose; and still depart
From death to death thro' life and life, and find
Nearer and ever nearer Him, who wrought
Not Matter, nor the finite-infinite,
But this main-miracle, that thou art thou,
With power on thine own act and on the world.

THE HUMAN CRY.

I.

HALLOWED be Thy name—Hallelujah!—
Infinite Ideality!
Immeasurable Reality!
Infinite Personality!
Hallowed be Thy name—Halleluiah!

II.

We feel we are nothing—for all is Thou and in Thee;
We feel we are something—*that* also has come from Thee;
We know we are nothing—but Thou wilt help us to be.
Hallowed be Thy name—Halleluiah!

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QUEEN MARY:

A DRAMA.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

QUEEN MARY.
PHILIP, *King of Naples and Sicily, afterwards King of Spain*
THE PRINCESS ELIZABETH.
REGINALD POLE, *Cardinal and Papal Legate.*
SIMON RENARD, *Spanish Ambassador.*
LE SIEUR DE NOAILLES, *French Ambassador.*
THOMAS CRANMER, *Archbishop of Canterbury.*
SIR NICHOLAS HEATH, *Archbishop of York; Lord Chancellor after Gardiner.*
EDWARD COURTENAY, *Earl of Devon.*
LORD WILLIAM HOWARD, *afterwards Lord Howard, and Lord High Admiral.*
LORD WILLIAMS OF THAME. LORD PAGET. LORD PETRE.
STEPHEN GARDINER, *Bishop of Winchester and Lord Chancellor.*
EDMUND BONNER, *Bishop of London.* THOMAS THIRLBY, *Bishop of Ely.*
SIR THOMAS WYATT, SIR THOMAS STAFFORD } *Insurrectionary Leaders.*
SIR RALPH BAGENHALL. SIR ROBERT SOUTHWELL.
SIR HENRY BEDINGFIELD. SIR WILLIAM CECIL.
SIR THOMAS WHITE, *Lord Mayor of London.*
THE DUKE OF ALVA, THE COUNT DE FERIA } *attending on Philip.*
PETER MARTYR. FATHER COLE. FATHER BOURNE.
VILLA GARCIA. SOTO.
CAPTAIN BRETT, ANTHONY KNYVETT } *Adherents of Wyatt.*
PETERS, *Gentleman of Lord Howard.*
ROGER, *Servant to Noailles.* WILLIAM, *Servant to Wyatt.*
STEWARD OF HOUSEHOLD *to the Princess Elizabeth.*
OLD NOKES *and* NOKES.
MARCHIONESS OF EXETER, *Mother of Courtenay.*
LADY CLARENCE, LADY MAGDALEN DACRES, ALICE } *Ladies in Waiting to the Queen.*
MAID OF HONOR *to the Princess Elizabeth.*
JOAN, TIB } *two Country Wives.*

Lords *and other* Attendants, Members *of the* Privy Council, Members *of* Parliament, Two Gentlemen, Aldermen, Citizens, Peasants, Ushers, Messengers, Guards, Pages, Gospellers, Marshalmen, *etc.*

ACT I.

SCENE I.—ALDGATE RICHLY DECORATED.

CROWD. MARSHALMEN.

Marshalman. Stand back, keep a clear lane! When will her Majesty pass, sayst thou? why now, even now; wherefore draw back your heads and your horns before I break them, and make what noise you will with your tongues, so it be not treason. Long live Queen Mary, the lawful and legitimate daughter of Harry the Eighth! Shout, knaves!

Citizens. Long live Queen Mary!

First Citizen. That's a hard word, legitimate; what does it mean?

Second Citizen. It means a bastard.

Third Citizen. Nay, it means true-born.

First Citizen. Why, didn't the Parliament make her a bastard?

Second Citizen. No; it was the Lady Elizabeth.

Third Citizen. That was after, man; that was after.

First Citizen. Then which is the bastard?

Second Citizen. Troth, they be both bastards by Act of Parliament and Council.

Third Citizen. Ay, the Parliament can make every true-born man of us a bastard. Old Nokes, can't it make thee a bastard? thou shouldst know, for thou art as white as three Christmasses.

Old Nokes (*dreamily*). Who's a-passing? King Edward or King Richard?

Third Citizen. No, old Nokes.

Old Nokes. It's Harry!

Third Citizen. It's Queen Mary.

Old Nokes. The blessed Mary's a-passing! [*Falls on his knees.*

Nokes. Let father alone, my masters! he's past your questioning.

Third Citizen. Answer thou for him, then! thou'rt no such cockerel thyself, for thou was born i' the tail end of old Harry the Seventh.

Nokes. Eh! that was afore bastard-making began. I was born true man at five in the forenoon i' the tail of old Harry, and so they can't make me a bastard.

Third Citizen. But if Parliament can make the Queen a bastard, why, it follows all the more that they can make thee one, who art fray'd i' the knees, and out at elbow, and bald o' the back, and bursten at the toes, and down at heels.

Nokes. I was born of a true man and a ring'd wife, and I can't argue upon it; but I and my old woman 'ud burn upon it, that would we.

Marshalman. What are you cackling of bastardy under the Queen's own nose? I'll have you flogg'd and burnt too, by the Rood I will.

First Citizen. He swears by the Rood. Whew!

Second Citizen. Hark! the trumpets.

[*The Procession passes*, Mary *and* Elizabeth *riding side by side, and disappears under the gate.* [*Exeunt.*

Citizens. Long live Queen Mary! down with all traitors! God save her Grace; and death to Northumberland!

Manent Two Gentlemen.

First Gentleman. By God's light a noble creature, right royal!

Second Gentleman. She looks comelier than ordinary to-day; but to my mind the Lady Elizabeth is the more noble and royal.

First Gentleman. I mean the Lady Elizabeth. Did you hear (I have a daughetr in her service who reported it) that she met the Queen at Wanstead with five hundred horse, and the Queen (tho' some say they be much divided) took her hand, call'd her sweet sister, and kiss'd not her alone, but all the ladies of her following.

Second Gentleman. Ay, that was in her hour of joy; there will be plenty to sunder and unsister them again: this Gardiner for one, who is to be made Lord Chancellor, and will pounce like a wild beast out of his cage to worry Cranmer.

First Gentleman. And furthermore, my daughter said that when there rose a talk of the late rebellion, she spoke even of Northumberland pitifully, and of the good Lady Jane as a poor innocent child who had but obeyed her father; and furthermore, she said that no one in her time should be burnt for heresy.

Second Gentleman. Well, sir, I look for happy times.

First Gentleman. There is but one thing against them. I know not if you know.

Second Gentleman. I suppose you

touch upon the rumor that Charles, the master of the world, has offer'd her his son Philip, the Pope and the Devil. I trust it is but a rumor.

First Gentleman. She is going now to the Tower to loose the prisoners there, and among them Courtenay, to be made Earl of Devon, of royal blood, of splendid feature, whom the council and all her people wish her to marry. May it be so, for we are many of us Catholics, but few Papists, and the Hot Gospellers will go mad upon it.

Second Gentleman. Was she not betroth'd in her babyhood to the Great Emperor himself?

First Gentleman. Ay, but he's too old.

Second Gentleman. And again to her cousin Reginald Pole, now Cardinal; but I hear that he too is full of aches and broken before his day.

First Gentleman. O, the Pope could dispense with his Cardinalate, and his achage, and his breakage, if that were all: will you not follow the procession?

Second Gentleman. No; I have seen enough for this day.

First Gentleman. Well, I shall follow; if I can get near enough I shall judge with my own eyes whether her Grace incline to this splendid scion of Plantagenet. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

A Room in Lambeth Palace.

Cranmer. To Strasburg, Antwerp, Frankfort, Zurich, Worms,
Geneva, Basle—our Bishops from their sees
Or fled, they say, or flying—Poinet, Barlow,
Bale, Scory, Coverdale; besides the Deans
Of Christchurch, Durham, Exeter, and Wells—
Ailmer and Bullingham, and hundreds more;
So they report: I shall be left alone.
No: Hooper, Ridley, Latimer will not fly.

Enter Peter Martyr.

Peter Martyr. Fly, Cranmer! were there nothing else, your name
Stands first of those who sign'd the Letters Patent
That gave her royal crown to Lady Jane.

Cranmer. Stand first it may, but it was written last:
Those that are now her Privy Council, sign'd
Before me: nay, the Judges had pronounced
That our young Edward might bequeath the crown
Of England, putting by his father's will.
Yet I stood out, till Edward sent for me.
The wan boy-king, with his fast-fading eyes
Fixt hard on mine, his frail transparent hand,
Damp with the sweat of death, and griping mine,
Whisper'd me, if I loved him, not to yield
His Church of England to the Papal wolf
And Mary; then I could no more—I sign'd.
Nay, for bare shame of inconsistency,
She cannot pass her traitor council by,
To make me headless.

Peter Martyr. That might be forgiven.
I tell you, fly, my Lord. You do not own
The bodily presence in the Eucharist,
Their wafer and perpetual sacrifice:
Your creed will be your death.

Cranmer. Step after step,
Thro' many voices crying right and left,
Have I climb'd back into the primal church,

And stand within the porch, and Christ with me :
My flight were such a scandal to the faith,
The downfall of so many simple souls,
I dare not leave my post.
Peter Martyr. But you divorced
Queen Catharine and her father; hence, her hate
Will burn till you are burn'd.
Cranmer. I cannot help it.
The Canonists and Schoolmen were with me.
'Thou shalt not wed thy brother's wife.'—'Tis written,
'They shall be childless.' True, Mary was born,
But France would not accept her for a bride
As being born from incest; and this wrought
Upon the king; and child by child, you know,
Were momentary sparkles out as quick
Almost as kindled; and he brought his doubts
And fears to me. Peter, I'll swear for him
He *did* believe the bond incestuous.
But wherefore am I trenching on the time
That should already have seen your steps a mile
From me and Lambeth? God be with you! Go.
Peter Martyr. Ah, but how fierce a letter you wrote against
Their superstition when they slander'd you
For setting up a mass at Canterbury
To please the Queen.
Cranmer. It was a wheedling monk
Set up the mass.
Peter Martyr. I know it, my good Lord.
But you so bubbled over with hot terms
Of Satan, liars, blasphemy, Antichrist,
She never will forgive you. Fly, my Lord, fly!
Cranmer. I wrote it, and God grant me power to burn!
Peter Martyr. They have given me a safe conduct: for all that
I dare not stay. I fear, I fear, I see you,
Dear friend, for the last time; farewell, and fly.
Cranmer. Fly and farewell, and let me die the death.
[*Exit* Peter Martyr.

Enter Old Servant.

O, kind and gentle master, the Queen's Officers
Are here in force to take you to the Tower.
Cranmer. Ay, gentle friend, admit them. I will go.
I thank my God it is too late to fly.
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—St. Paul's Cross.

Father Bourne *in the pulpit. A crowd.* Marchioness of Exeter, Courtenay. *The* Sieur de Noailles *and his man* Roger *in front of the stage. Hubbub.*

Noailles. Hast thou let fall those papers in the palace?
Roger. Ay, sir.
Noailles. 'There will be no peace for Mary till Elizabeth lose her head.'
Roger. Ay, sir.
Noailles. And the other, 'Long live Elizabeth the Queen!'
Roger. Ay, sir; she needs must tread upon them.
Noailles. Well.
These beastly swine make such a grunting here,
I cannot catch what Father Bourne is saying.
Roger. Quiet a moment, my masters; hear what the shaveling has to say for himself.
Crowd. Hush—hear!
Bourne. —and so this unhappy land, long divided in itself, and sever'd from the faith, will return into the one

true fold, seeing that our gracious Virgin Queen hath——

Crowd. No pope! no pope!

Roger (*to those about him, mimicking* Bourne). —hath sent for the holy legate of the holy father the Pope, Cardinal Pole, to give us all that holy absolution which——

First Citizen. Old Bourne to the life!

Second Citizen. Holy absolution! holy Inquisition!

Third Citizen. Down with the Papist! [*Hubbub.*

Bourne. —and now that your good bishop, Bonner, who hath lain so long under bonds for the faith— [*Hubbub.*

Noailles. Friend Roger, steal thou in among the crowd,
And get the swine to shout Elizabeth.
Yon gray old Gospeller, sour as midwinter,
Begin with him.

Roger (*goes*). By the mass, old friend, we'll have no pope here while the Lady Elizabeth lives.

Gospeller. Art thou of the true faith, fellow, that swearest by the mass?

Roger. Ay, that am I, new converted, but the old leaven sticks to my tongue yet.

First Citizen. He says right; by the mass we'll have no mass here.

Voices of the crowd. Peace! hear him; let his own words damn the Papist. From thine own mouth I judge thee—tear him down!

Bourne. —and since our Gracious Queen, let me call her our second Virgin Mary, hath begun to re-edify the true temple——

First Citizen. Virgin Mary! we'll have no virgins here—we'll have the Lady Elizabeth!

[*Swords are drawn, a knife is hurled and sticks in the pulpit. The mob throng to the pulpit stairs.*

Marchioness of Exeter. Son Courtenay, wilt thou see the holy father
Murdered before thy face? up, son, and save him!
They love thee, and thou canst not come to harm.

Courtenay (*in the pulpit*). Shame shame, my masters! are you English-born,
And set yourselves by hundreds against one?

Crowd. A Courtenay! a Courtenay!

[*A train of Spanish servants crosses at the back of the stage.*

Noailles. These birds of passage come before their time:
Stave off the crowd upon the Spaniard there.

Roger. My masters, yonder's fatter game for you
Than this old gaping gurgoyle: look you there—
The Prince of Spain coming to wed our Queen!
After him, boys! and pelt him from the city.

[*They seize stones and follow the Spaniards. Exeunt on the other side* Marchioness of Exeter *and* Attendants.

Noailles (*to* Roger). Stand from me. If Elizabeth lose her head—
That makes for France.
And if her people, anger'd thereupon,
Arise against her and dethrone the Queen—
That makes for France.
And if I breed confusion anyway—
That makes for France.
Good-day, my Lord of Devon;
A bold heart yours to beard that raging mob!

Courtenay. My mother said, Go up; and up I went.
I knew they would not do me any wrong,
For I am mighty popular with them, Noailles.

Noailles. You look'd a king.

Courtenay. Why not? I am king's blood.

Noailles. And in the whirl of change may come to be one.

Courtenay. Ah!
Noailles. But does your gracious Queen entreat you kinglike?
Courtenay. 'Fore God, I think she entreats me like a child.
Noailles. You've but a dull life in this maiden court,
I fear, my Lord?
Courtenay. A life of nods and yawns.
Noailles. So you would honor my poor house to-night,
We might enliven you. Divers honest fellows,
The Duke of Suffolk lately freed from prison,
Sir Peter Carew and Sir Thomas Wyatt,
Sir Thomas Stafford, and some more —we play.
Courtenay. At what?
Noailles. The Game of Chess.
Courtenay. The Game of Chess!
I can play well, and I shall beat you there.
Noailles. Ay, but we play with Henry, King of France,
And certain of his court.
His Highness makes his moves across the Channel,
We answer him with ours, and there are messengers
That go between us.
Courtenay. Why, such a game, sir, were whole years a playing.
Noailles. Nay; not so long I trust. That all depends
Upon the skill and swiftness of the players.
Courtenay. The King is skilful at it?
Noailles. Very, my Lord.
Courtenay. And the stakes high?
Noailles. But not beyond your means.
Courtenay. Well, I'm the first of players. I shall win.
Noailles. With our advice and in our company,
And so you well attend to the king's moves,
I think you may.
Courtenay. When do you meet?
Noailles. To-night.
Courtenay (*aside*). I will be there; the fellow's at his tricks—
Deep—I shall fathom him. (*Aloud.*) Good morning, Noailles.
[*Exit* Courtenay.
Noailles. Good-day, my Lord. strange game of chess! a King
That with her own pawns plays against a Queen,
Whose play is all to find herself a King.
Ay; but this fine blue-blooded Courtenay seems
Too princely for a pawn. Call him a Knight,
That, with an ass's, not a horse's head,
Skips every way, from levity or from fear.
Well, we shall use him somehow, so that Gardiner
And Simon Renard spy not out our game
Too early. Roger, thinkest thou that anyone
Suspected thee to be my man?
Roger. Not one, sir.
Noailles. No! the disguise was perfect. Let's away. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.

LONDON. A ROOM IN THE PALACE.

ELIZABETH. *Enter* COURTENAY.

Courtenay. So yet am I,
Unless my friends and mirrors lie to me,
A goodlier-looking fellow than this Philip.
Pah!
The Queen is ill advised: shall I turn traitor?
They've almost talked me into it: yet the word
Affrights me somewhat: to be such a one
As Harry Bolingbroke hath a lure in it.
Good now, my Lady Queen, tho' by your age,

And by your looks you are not worth the having,
Yet by your crown you are.
[*Seeing* Elizabeth.
The Princess there?
If I tried her and la—she's amorous.
Have we not heard of her in Edward's time,
Her freaks and frolics with the late Lord Admiral?
I do believe she'd yield. I should be still
A party in the state; and then, who knows—
Elizabeth. What are you musing on, my Lord of Devon?
Courtenay. Has not the Queen—
Elizabeth. Done what, Sir?
Courtenay. —made you follow
The Lady Suffolk and the Lady Lennox?—
You,
The heir presumptive.
Elizabeth. Why do you ask? you know it.
Courtenay. You needs must bear it hardly.
Elizabeth. No, indeed!
I am utterly submissive to the Queen.
Courtenay. Well, I was musing upon that; the Queen
Is both my foe and yours: we should be friends.
Elizabeth. My Lord, the hatred of another to us
Is no true bond of friendship.
Courtenay. Might it not
Be the rough preface of some closer bond?
Elizabeth. My Lord, you late were loosed from out the Tower,
Where, like a butterfly in a chrysalis,
You spent your life; that broken, out you flutter
Thro' the new world, go zigzag, now would settle
Upon this flower, now that; but all things here
At court are known; you have solicited
The Queen, and been rejected.
Courtenay. Flower, she!
Half faded! but you, cousin, are fresh and sweet
As the first flower no bee has ever tried.
Elizabeth. Are you the bee to try me? why, but now
I called you butterfly.
Courtenay. You did me wrong,
I love not to be called a butterfly:
Why do you call me butterfly?
Elizabeth. Why do you go so gay then?
Courtenay. Velvet and gold.
This dress was made me as the Earl of Devon
To take my seat in; looks it not right royal?
Elizabeth. So royal that the Queen forbad you wearing it.
Courtenay. I wear it then to spite her.
Elizabeth. My Lord, my Lord;
I see you in the Tower again. Her Majesty
Hears you affect the Prince—prelates kneel to you.—
Courtenay. I am the noblest blood in Europe, Madam,
A Courtenay of Devon, and her cousin.
Elizabeth. She hears you make your boast that after all
She means to wed you. Folly, my good Lord.
Courtenay. How folly? a great party in the state
Wills me to wed her.
Elizabeth. Failing her, my Lord,
Doth not as great a party in the state
Will you to wed me?
Courtenay. Even so, fair lady.
Elizabeth. You know to flatter ladies.
Courtenay. Nay, I meant
True matters of the heart.
Elizabeth. *My* heart, my Lord,
Is no great party in the state as yet.
Courtenay. Great, said you? nay, you shall be great. I love you,
Lay my life in your hands. Can you be close?
Elizabeth. Can you, my Lord?
Courtenay. Close as a miser's casket.
Listen:

The King of France, Noailles the Ambassador,
The Duke of Suffolk and Sir Peter Carew,
Sir Thomas Wyatt, I myself, some others,
Have sworn this Spanish marriage shall not be.
If Mary will not hear us—well—conjecture—
Were I in Devon with my wedded bride,
The people there so worship me—Your ear;
You shall be Queen.
Elizabeth. You speak too low, my Lord;
I cannot hear you.
Courtenay. I'll repeat it.
Elizabeth. No!
Stand further off, or you may lose your head.
Courtenay. I have a head to lose for your sweet sake.
Elizabeth. Have you, my Lord? Best keep it for your own.
Nay, pout not, cousin.
Not many friends are mine, except indeed
Among the many. I believe you mine;
And so you may continue mine, farewell,
And that at once.

Enter MARY, *behind.*

Mary. Whispering—leagued together
To bar me from my Philip.
Courtenay. Pray—consider—
Elizabeth (*seeing the* Queen). Well, that's a noble horse of yours, my Lord.
I trust that he will carry you well today,
And heal your headache.
Courtenay. You are wild; what headache?
Heartache, perchance; not headache.
Elizabeth (*aside to* Courtenay). Are you blind?

[Courtenay *sees the* Queen *and exit. Exit* Mary.

Enter LORD WILLIAM HOWARD.

Howard. Was that my Lord of Devon? do not you
Be seen in corners with my Lord of Devon.
He hath fallen out of favor with the Queen.
She fears the Lords may side with you and him
Against her marriage; therefore is he dangerous.
And if this Prince of fluff and feather come
To woo you, niece, he is dangerous everyway.
Elizabeth. Not very dangerous that way, my good uncle.
Howard. But your own state is full of danger here.
The disaffected, heretics, reformers,
Look to you as the one to crown their ends.
Mix not yourself with any plot I pray you;
Nay, if by chance you hear of any such,
Speak not thereof—no, not to your best friend,
Lest you should be confounded with it. Still—
Perinde ac cadaver—as the priest says,
You know your Latin—quiet as a dead body.
What was my Lord of Devon telling you?
Elizabeth. Whether he told me anything or not,
I follow your good counsel, gracious uncle.
Quiet as a dead body.
Howard. You do right well.
I do not care to know; but this I charge you,
Tell Courtenay nothing. The Lord Chancellor
(I count it as a kind of virtue in him,
He hath not many), as a mastiff dog

May love a puppy cur for no more reason
Than that the twain have been tied up together,
Thus Gardiner—for the two were fellow-prisoners
So many years in yon accursed Tower—
Hath taken to this Courtenay. Look to it, niece,
He hath no fence when Gardiner questions him;
All oozes out; yet him—because they know him
The last White Rose, the last Plantagenet
(Nay, there is Cardinal Pole, too), the people
Claim as their natural leader—ay, some say,
That you shall marry him, make him King belike.

Elizabeth. Do they say so, good uncle?

Howard. Ay, good niece!
You should be plain and open with me, niece.
You should not play upon me.

Elizabeth. No, good uncle.

Enter GARDINER.

Gardiner. The Queen would see your Grace upon the moment.

Elizabeth. Why, my lord Bishop?

Gardiner. I think she means to counsel your withdrawing
To Ashridge, or some other country house.

Elizabeth. Why, my lord Bishop?

Gardiner. I do but bring the message, know no more.
Your Grace will hear her reasons from herself.

Elizabeth. 'Tis mine own wish fulfill'd before the word
Was spoken, for in truth I had meant to crave
Permission of her Highness to retire
To Ashridge, and pursue my studies there.

Gardiner. Madam, to have the wish before the word
Is man's good Fairy—and the Queen is yours.
I left her with rich jewels in her hand,
Whereof 'tis like enough she means to make
A farewell present to your Grace.

Elizabeth. My Lord,
I have the jewel of a loyal heart.

Gardiner. I doubt it not, Madam, most loyal. [*Bows low and exit.*

Howard. See,
This comes of parleying with my Lord of Devon.
Well, well, you must obey; and I myself
Believe it will be better for your welfare.
Your time will come.

Elizabeth. I think my time will come.
Uncle,
I am of sovereign nature, that I know,
Not to be quell'd; and I have felt within me
Stirrings of some great doom when God's just hour
Peals—but this fierce old Gardiner—his big baldness,
That irritable forelock which he rubs,
His buzzard beak and deep-incavern'd eyes
Half fright me.

Howard. You've a bold heart; keep it so.
He cannot touch you save that you turn traitor;
And so take heed I pray you—you are one
Who love that men should smile upon you, niece.
They'd smile you into treason—some of them.

Elizabeth. I spy the rock beneath the smiling sea.
But if this Philip, the proud Catholic prince,
And this bald priest, and she that hates me, seek
In that lone house, to practise on my life,
By poison, fire, shot, stab—

Howard. They will not, niece.
Mine is the fleet and all the power at sea—
Or will be in a moment. If they dared
To harm you, I would blow this Philip and all
Your trouble to the dogstar and the devil.
Elizabeth. To the Pleiads, uncle; they have lost a sister.
Howard. But why say that? what have you done to lose her?
Come, come, I will go with you to the Queen. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE V.

A Room in the Palace.

Mary *with* Philip's *miniature.* Alice.

Mary (*kissing the miniature*). Most goodly, Kinglike and an Emperor's son,—
A king to be,—is he not noble, girl?
Alice. Goodly enough, your Grace, and yet, methinks,
I have seen goodlier.
Mary. Ay; some waxen doll
Thy baby eyes have rested on, belike;
All red and white, the fashion of our land.
But my good mother came (God rest her soul)
Of Spain, and I am Spanish in myself,
And in my likings.
Alice. By your Grace's leave
Your royal mother came of Spain, but took
To the English red and white. Your royal father
(For so they say) was all pure lily and rose
In his youth, and like a lady.
Mary. O, just God!
Sweet mother, you had time and cause enough
To sicken of his lilies and his roses.
Cast off, betray'd, defamed, divorced, forlorn!
And then the King—that traitor past forgiveness,
The false archbishop fawning on him, married
The mother of Elizabeth—a heretic
Ev'n as *she* is; but God hath sent me here
To take such order with all heretics
That it shall be, before I die, as tho'
My father and my brother had not lived.
What wast thou saying of this Lady Jane,
Now in the Tower?
Alice. Why, Madam, she was passing
Some chapel down in Essex, and with her
Lady Anne Wharton, and the Lady Anne
Bow'd to the Pyx; but Lady Jane stood up
Stiff as the very backbone of heresy.
And wherefore bow ye not, says Lady Anne,
To him within there who made Heaven and Earth?
I cannot, and I dare not, tell your Grace
What Lady Jane replied.
Mary. But I will have it.
Alice. She said—pray pardon me, and pity her—
She hath harken'd evil counsel—ah! she said,
The baker made him.
Mary. Monstrous! blasphemous!
She ought to burn. Hence, thou (*Exit* Alice). No—being traitor
Her head will fall: shall it? she is but a child.
We do not kill the child for doing that
His father whipt him into doing—a head
So full of grace and beauty! would that mine
Were half as gracious! O, my lord to be,
My love, for thy sake only.
I am eleven years older than he is.
But will he care for that?

No, by the holy Virgin, being noble,
But love me only: then the bastard sprout,
My sister, is far fairer than myself.
Will he be drawn to her?
No, being of the true faith with myself.
Paget is for him—for to wed with Spain
Would treble England—Gardiner is against him;
The Council, people, Parliament against him;
But I will have him! My hard father hated me;
My brother rather hated me than loved;
My sister cowers and hates me. Holy Virgin,
Plead with thy blessed Son; grant me my prayer:
Give me my Philip; and we two will lead
The living waters of the Faith again
Back thro' their widow'd channel here, and watch
The parch'd banks rolling incense, as of old,
To heaven, and kindled with the palms of Christ!

Enter USHER.

Who waits, sir?

Usher. Madam, the Lord Chancellor.

Mary. Bid him come in. (*Enter* GARDINER.) Good morning, my good Lord. [*Exit* Usher.

Gardiner. That every morning of your Majesty
May be most good, is every morning's prayer
Of your most loyal subject, Stephen Gardiner.

Mary. Come you to tell me this, my Lord?

Gardiner. And more.
Your people have begun to learn your worth.
Your pious wish to pay King Edward's debts,
Your lavish household curb'd, and the remission
Of half that subsidy levied on the people,
Make all tongues praise and all hearts beat for you.
I'd have you yet more loved: the realm is poor,
The exchequer at neap-tide: we might withdraw
Part of our garrison at Calais.

Mary. Calais!
Our one point on the main, the gate of France!
I am Queen of England; take mine eyes, mine heart,
But do not lose me Calais.

Gardiner. Do not fear it.
Of that hereafter. I say your Grace is loved.
That I may keep you thus, who am your friend
And ever faithful counsellor, might I speak?

Mary. I can forespeak your speaking. Would I marry
Prince Philip, if all England hate him? That is
Your question, and I front it with another:
Is it England, or a party? Now, your answer.

Gardiner. My answer is, I wear beneath my dress
A shirt of mail: my house hath been assaulted,
And when I walk abroad, the populace,
With fingers pointed like so many daggesr,
Stab me in fancy, hissing Spain and Philip;
And when I sleep, a hundred men-at-arms
Guard my poor dreams for England. Men would murder me,
Because they think me favorer of this marriage.

Mary. And that were hard upon you, my Lord Chancellor.

Gardiner. But our young Earl of Devon—

Mary. Earl of Devon?

I freed him from the Tower, placed him at Court;
I made him Earl of Devon, and—the fool—
He wrecks his health and wealth on courtesans,
And rolls himself in carrion like a dog.
Gardiner. More like a school-boy that hath broken bounds,
Sickening himself with sweets.
Mary. I will not hear of him.
Good, then, they will revolt: but I am Tudor,
And shall control them.
Gardiner. I will help you, Madam,
Even to the utmost. All the church is grateful.
You have ousted the mock priest, repulpited
The shepherd of St. Peter, raised the rood again,
And brought us back the mass. I am all thanks
To God and to your Grace: yet I know well,
Your people, and I go with them so far,
Will brook nor Pope nor Spaniard here to play
The tyrant, or in commonwealth or church.
Mary (*showing the picture*). Is this the face of one who plays the tyrant?
Peruse it; is it not goodly, ay, and gentle?
Gardiner. Madam, methinks a cold face and a haughty.
And when your Highness talks of Courtenay—
Ay, true—a goodly one. I would his life
Were half as goodly (*aside*).
Mary. What is that you mutter?
Gardiner. Oh, Madam, take it bluntly; marry Philip,
And be stepmother of a score of sons!
The Prince is known in Spain, in Flanders, ha!
For Philip—
Mary. You offend us; you may leave us.
You see thro' warping glasses.
Gardiner. If your Majesty—
Mary. I have sworn upon the body and blood of Christ
I'll none but Philip.
Gardiner. Hath your Grace so sworn?
Mary. Ay, Simon Renard knows it.
Gardiner. News to me!
It then remains for your poor Gardiner,
So you still care to trust him somewhat less
Than Simon Renard, to compose the event
In some such form as least may harm your Grace.
Mary. I'll have the scandal sounded to the mud.
I know it a scandal.
Gardiner All my hope is now
It may be found a scandal.
Mary. You offend us.
Gardiner (*aside*). These princes are like children, must be physick'd,
The bitter in the sweet. I have lost mine office,
It may be, thro' mine honesty, like a fool. [*Exit.*

Enter USHER.

Mary. Who waits?
Usher. The Ambassador from France, your Grace.
Mary (*sits down*). Bid him come in. Good morning, Sir de Noailles. [*Exit* Usher.
Noailels (*entering*). A happy morning to your Majesty.
Mary. And I should some time have a happy morning;
I have had none yet. What says the King your master?
Noailles. Madam, my master hears with much alarm,
That you may marry Philip, Prince of Spain—
Foreseeing, with whate'er unwillingness,

That if this Philip be the titular king
Of England, and at war with him, your Grace
And kingdom will be suck'd into the war,
Ay, tho' you long for peace; wherefore, my master,
If but to prove your Majesty's goodwill,
Would fain have some fresh treaty drawn between you.
Mary. Why some fresh treaty? wherefore should I do it?
Sir, if we marry, we shall still maintain
All former treaties with his Majesty.
Our royal word for that! and your good master,
Pray God he do not be the first to break them,
Must be content with that; and so, farewell.
Noailles (*going*, *returns*). I would your answer had been other, Madam,
For I foresee dark days.
Mary. And so do I, sir;
Your master works against me in the dark.
I do believe he holp Northumberland
Against me.
Noailles. Nay, pure phantasy, your Grace.
Why should he move against you?
Mary. Will you hear why?
Mary of Scotland,—for I have not own'd
My sister, and I will not,—after me
Is heir of England; and my royal father,
To make the crown of Scotland one with ours,
Had mark'd her for my brother Edward's bride;
Ay, but your king stole her a babe from Scotland
In order to betroth her to your Dauphin.
See then:
Mary of Scotland, married to your Dauphin,
Would make our England, France;
Mary of England, joining hands with Spain,
Would be too strong for France.
Yea, were there issue born to her, Spain and we,
One crown, might rule the world. There lies your fear.
That is your drift. You play at hide and seek.
Show me your faces!
Noailles. Madam, I am amazed:
French, I must needs wish all good things for France.
That must be pardon'd me; but I protest
Your Grace's policy hath a farther flight
Than mine into the future. We but seek
Some settled ground for peace to stand upon.
Mary. Well, we will leave all this, sir, to our council.
Have you seen Philip ever?
Noailles. Only once.
Mary. Is this like Philip?
Noailles. Ay, but nobler-looking.
Mary. Hath he the large ability of the Emperor?
Noailles. No, surely.
Mary. I can make allowance for thee,
Thou speakest of the enemy of thy king.
Noailles. Make no allowance for the naked truth.
He is every way a lesser man than Charles;
Stone-hard, ice-cold—no dash of daring in him.
Mary. If cold, his life is pure.
Noailles. Why (*smiling*), no, indeed.
Mary. Sayst thou?
Noailles. A very wanton life indeed (*smiling*).
Mary. Your audience is concluded, sir. [*Exit* Noailles.
You cannot
Learn a man's nature from his natural foe.

Enter USHER.

Who waits?

Usher. The Ambassador of Spain, your Grace. [*Exit.*

Enter SIMON RENARD.

Mary (*rising to meet him*). Thou art ever welcome, Simon Renard. Hast thou
Brought me the letter which thine Emperor promised
Long since, a formal offer of the hand
Of Philip?

Renard. Nay, your Grace, it hath not reach'd me.
I know not wherefore—some mischance of flood,
And broken bridge, or spavin'd horse, or wave
And wind at their old battle: he must have written.

Mary. But Philip never writes me one poor word,
Which in his absence had been all my wealth.
Strange in a wooer!

Renard. Yet I know the Prince,
So your king-parliament suffer him to land,
Yearns to set foot upon your island shore.

Mary. God change the pebble which his kingly foot
First presses into some more costly stone
Than ever blinded eye. I'll have one mark it
And bring it me. I'll have it burnish'd firelike;
I'll set it round with gold, with pearl, with diamond.
Let the great angel of the church come with him;
Stand on the deck and spread his wings for sail!
God lay the waves and strow the storms at sea,
And here at land among the people! O Renard,
I am much beset, I am almost in despair.
Paget is ours. Gardiner perchance is ours;
But for our heretic Parliament—

Renard. O Madam,
You fly your thoughts like kites. My master, Charles,
Bad you go softly with your heretics here,
Until your throne had ceased to tremble. Then
Spit them like larks for aught I care. Besides,
When Henry broke the carcase of your church
To pieces, there were many wolves among you
Who dragg'd the scatter'd limbs into their den.
The Pope would have you make them render these;
So would your cousin, Cardinal Pole; ill counsel!
These let them keep at present; stir not yet
This matter of the Church lands. At his coming
Your star will rise.

Mary. My star! a baleful one.
I see but the black night, and hear the wolf.
What star?

Renard. Your star will be your princely son,
Heir of this England and the Netherlands!
And if your wolf the while should howl for more,
We'll dust him from a bag of Spanish gold.
I do believe, I have dusted some already,
That, soon or late, your Parliament is ours.

Mary. Why do they talk so foully of your Prince,
Renard?

Renard. The lot of Princes. To sit high
Is to be lied about.

Mary. They call him cold,
Haughty, ay, worse.

Renard. Why, doubtless, Philip shows

Some of the bearing of your blue blood—still
All within measure—nay, it well becomes him.
Mary. Hath he the large ability of his father?
Renard. Nay, some believe that he will go beyond him.
Mary. Is this like him?
Renard. Ay, somewhat; but your Philip
Is the most princelike Prince beneath the sun.
This is a daub to Philip.
Mary. Of a pure life?
Renard. As an angel among angels. Yea, by Heaven,
The text—Your Highness knows it, 'Whosoever
Looketh after a woman,' would not graze
The Prince of Spain. You are happy in him there,
Chaste as your Grace!
Mary. I am happy in him there.
Renard. And would be altogether happy, Madam,
So that your sister were but look'd to closer.
You have sent her from the court, but then she goes,
I warrant, not to hear the nightingales,
But hatch you some new treason in the woods.
Mary. We have our spies abroad to catch her tripping,
And then if caught, to the tower.
Renard. The Tower! the block!
The word has turn'd your Highness pale; the thing
Was no such scarecrow in your father's time.
I have heard, the tongue yet quiver'd with the jest
When the head leapt—so common! I do think
To save your crown that it must come to this.
Mary. No, Renard; it must never come to this.
Renard. Not yet; but your old Traitors of the Tower—
Why, when you put Northumberland to death,
The sentence having past upon them all,
Spared you the Duke of Suffolk, Guildford Dudley,
Ev'n that young girl who dared to wear your crown?
Mary. Dared? nay, not so; the child obey'd her father.
Spite of her tears her father forced it on her.
Renard. Good Madam, when the Roman wish'd to reign,
He slew not him alone who wore the purple,
But his assessor in the throne, perchance
A child more innocent than Lady Jane.
Mary. I am English Queen, not Roman Emperor.
Renard. Yet too much mercy is a want of mercy,
And wastes more life. Stamp out the fire, or this
Will smoulder and re-flame, and burn the throne
Where you should sit with Philip: he will not come
Till she be gone.
Mary. Indeed, if that were true—
For Philip comes, one hand in mine, and one
Steadying the tremulous pillars of the Church—
But no, no, no. Farewell. I am somewhat faint
With our long talk. Tho' Queen, I am not Queen
Of mine own heart, which every now and then
Beats me half dead: yet stay, this golden chain—
My father on a birthday gave it me,
And I have broken with my father—take
And wear it as memorial of a morning
Which found me full of foolish doubts, and leaves me
As hopeful.

Renard (*aside*). Whew—the folly of all follies
Is to be love-sick for a shadow. (*Aloud*) Madam,
This chains me to your service, not with gold,
But dearest links of love. Farewell, and trust me,
Philip is yours. [*Exit.*

Mary. Mine—but not yet all mine.

Enter USHER.

Usher. Your Council is in Session, please your Majesty.

Mary. Sir, let them sit. I must have time to breathe.
No, say I come. (*Exit* Usher.) I won by boldness once.
The Emperor counsell'd me to fly to Flanders.
I would not; but a hundred miles I rode,
Sent out my letters, call'd my friends together,
Struck home and won.
And when the Council would not crown me—thought
To bind me first by oaths I could not keep,
And keep with Christ and conscience —was it boldness
Or weakness that won there? when I, their Queen,
Cast myself down upon my knees before them,
And those hard men brake into woman-tears,
Ev'n Gardiner, all amazed, and in that passion
Gave me my Crown.

Enter ALICE.

Girl; hast thou ever heard
Slanders against Prince Philip in our Court?

Alice. What slanders? I, your Grace; no, never.

Mary. Nothing?

Alice. Never, your Grace.

Mary. See that you neither hear them nor repeat!

Alice (*aside*). Good Lord! but I have heard a thousand such.
Ay, and repeated them as often—mum!
Why comes that old fox-Fleming back again?

Enter RENARD.

Renard. Madam, I scarce had left your Grace's presence
Before I chanced upon the messenger
Who brings that letter which we waited for—
The formal offer of Prince Philip's hand.
It craves an instant answer, Ay or No.

Mary. An instant Ay or No! the Council sits.
Give it me quick.

Alice (*stepping before her*). Your Highness is all trembling.

Mary. Make way.

[*Exit into the Council Chamber.*

Alice. O, Master Renard, Master Renard,
If you have falsely painted your fine Prince;
Praised, where you should have blamed him, I pray God
No woman ever love you, Master Renard.
It breaks my heart to hear her moan at night
As tho' the nightmare never left her bed.

Renard. My pretty maiden, tell me, did you ever
Sigh for a beard?

Alice. That's not a pretty question.

Renard. Not prettily put? I mean, my pretty maiden,
A pretty man for such a pretty maiden.

Alice. My Lord of Devon is a pretty man.
I hate him. Well, but if I have, what then?

Renard. Then, pretty maiden, you should know that whether
A wind be warm or cold, it serves to fan

"IN ROBE AND CROWN THE KING STEPT DOWN."—*Page 101.*

A kindled fire.
Alice. According to the song.

His friends would praise him, I believed 'em,
His foes would blame him, and I scorn'd 'em,
His friends—as Angels I received 'em,
His foes—the Devil had suborn'd 'em.

Renard. Peace, pretty maiden.
I hear them stirring in the Council Chamber.
Lord Paget's 'Ay' is sure—who else? and yet,
They are all too much at odds to close at once
In one full-throated No! Her Highness comes.

Enter MARY.

Alice. How deathly pale!—a chair, your Highness.
[*Bringing one to the* Queen.
Renard. Madam,
The Council?
Mary. Ay! My Philip is all mine.
[*Sinks into chair, half fainting.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.—ALINGTON CASTLE.

Sir Thomas Wyatt. I do not hear from Carew or the Duke
Of Suffolk, and till then I should not move.
The Duke hath gone to Leicester; Carew stirs
In Devon: that fine porcelain Courtenay,
Save that he fears he might be crack'd in using,
(I have known a semi-madman in my time
So fancy-ridd'n) should be in Devon too.

Enter WILLIAM.

News abroad, William?

William. None so new, Sir Thomas, and none so old, Sir Thomas. No new news that Philip comes to wed Mary, no old news that all men hate it. Old Sir Thomas would have hated it. The bells are ringing at Maidstone. Doesn't your worship hear?

Wyatt. Ay, for the Saints are come to reign again,
Most like it is a Saint's-day. There's no call
As yet for me; so in this pause, before
The mine be fired, it were a pious work
To string my father's sonnets, left about
Like loosely-scatter'd jewels, in fair order,
And head them with a lamer rhyme of mine,
To grace his memory.

William. Ay, why not, Sir Thomas? He was a fine courtier, he; Queen Anne loved him. All the women loved him. I loved him; I was in Spain with him. I couldn't eat in Spain, I couldn't sleep in Spain. I hate Spain, Sir Thomas.

Wyatt. But thou could'st drink in Spain if I remember.

William. Sir Thomas, we may grant the wine. Old Sir Thomas always granted the wine.

Wyatt. Hand me the casket with my father's sonnets.

William. Ay—sonnets—a fine courtier of the old Court, old Sir Thomas. [*Exit.*

Wyatt. Courtier of many courts, he loved the more
His own gray towers, plain life and letter'd peace,
To read and rhyme in solitary fields,
The lark above, the nightingale below,
And answer them in song. The sire begets
Not half his likeness in the son. I fail
Where he was fullest: yet—to write it down. [*He writes.*

Re-enter WILLIAM.

William. There *is* news, there *is* news, and no call for sonnet-sorting now, nor for sonnet-making either, but ten thousand men on Penenden Heath all calling after your worship, and your worship's name heard into Maidstone Market, and your worship the first man in Kent and Christendom, for the Queen's down, and the world's up, and your worship a-top of it.

Wyatt. Inverted Æsop—mountain out of mouse.

Say for ten thousand ten—and pot-house knaves,
Brain-dizzied with a draught of morning ale.

Enter ANTONY KNYVETT.

William. Here's Antony Knyvett.

Knyvett. Look you, Master Wyatt,
Tear up that woman's work there.

Wyatt. No; not these,
Dumb children of my father, that will speak
When I and thou and all rebellions lie
Dead bodies without voice. Song flies you know
For ages.

Knyvett. Tut, your sonnet's a flying ant,
Wing'd for a moment.

Wyatt. Well, for mine own work,
[*Tearing the paper.*
It lies there in six pieces at your feet;
For all that I can carry it in my head.

Knyvett. If you can carry your head upon your shoulders.

Wyatt. I fear you come to carry it off my shoulders,
And sonnet-making's safer.

Knyvett. Why, good Lord,
Write you as many sonnets as you will.
Ay, but not now; what, have you eyes, ears, brains?
This Philip and the black-faced swarms of Spain,
The hardest, cruellest people in the world,
Come locusting upon us, eat us up,
Confiscate lands, goods, money—Wyatt, Wyatt,
Wake, or the stout old island will become
A rotten limb of Spain. They roar for you
On Penenden Heath, a thousand of them—more—
All arm'd, waiting a leader; there's no glory
Like his who saves his country: and you sit
Sing-songing here; but, if I'm any judge,
By God, you are as poor a poet, Wyatt,
As a good soldier.

Wyatt. You as poor a critic
As an honest friend: you stroke me on one cheek,
Buffet the other. Come, you bluster, Antony!
You know I know all this. I must not move
Until I hear from Carew and the Duke.
I fear the mine is fired before the time.

Knyvett (*showing a paper*). But here's some Hebrew. Faith, I half forgot it.
Look; can you make it English? A strange youth
Suddenly thrust it on me, whisper'd, 'Wyatt,'
And whisking round a corner, show'd his back
Before I read his face.

Wyatt. Ha! Courtenay's cipher.
[*Reads.*

'Sir Peter Carew fled to France: it is thought the Duke will be taken. I am with you still; but, for appearance sake, stay with the Queen. Gardiner knows, but the Council are all at odds, and the Queen hath no force for resistance. Move, if you move, at once.'

Is Peter Carew fled? Is the Duke taken?
Down scabbard, and out sword! and let Rebellion

Roar till throne rock, and crown fall. No; not that;
But we will teach Queen Mary how to reign.
Who are those that shout below there?
Knyvett. Why, some fifty
That follow'd me from Penenden Heath in hope
To hear you speak.
Wyatt. Open the window, Knyvett; The mine is fired, and I will speak to them.

Men of Kent; England of England; you that have kept your old customs upright, while all the rest of England bow'd theirs to the Norman, the cause that hath brought us together is not the cause of a county or a shire, but of this England, in whose crown our Kent is the fairest jewel. Philip shall not wed Mary; and ye have called me to be your leader. I know Spain. I have been there with my father; I have seen them in their own land; have marked the haughtiness of their nobles; the cruelty of their priests. If this man marry our Queen, however the Council and the Commons may fence round his power with restriction, he will be King, King of England, my masters; and the Queen, and the laws, and the people, his slaves. What? shall we have Spain on the throne and in the parliament; Spain in the pulpit and on the lawbench; Spain in all the great offices of state; Spain in our ships, in our forts, in our houses, in our beds?

Crowd. No! no! no Spain!

William. No Spain in our beds —that were worse than all. I have been there with old Sir Thomas, and the beds I know. I hate Spain.

A Peasant. But, Sir Thomas, must we levy war against the Queen's Grace?

Wyatt. No, my friend; war *for* the Queen's Grace—to save her from herself and Philip—war against Spain. And think not we shall be alone—thousands will flock to us. The Council, the Court itself, is on our side. The Lord Chancellor himself is on our side. The King of France is with us; the King of Denmark is with us; the world is with us—war against Spain! And if we move not now, yet it will be known that we have moved; and if Philip come to be King, O, my God! the rope, the rack, the thumbscrew, the stake, the fire. If we move not now, Spain moves, bribes our nobles with her gold, and creeps, creeps snake-like about our legs till we cannot move at all; and ye know, my masters, that wherever Spain hath ruled she hath wither'd all beneath her. Look at the New World—a paradise made hell; the red man, that good helpless creature, starved, maim'd, flogg'd, flay'd, burn'd, boil'd, buried alive, worried by dogs; and here, nearer home, the Netherlands, Sicily, Naples, Lombardy. I say no more—only this, their lot is yours. Forward to London with me! forward to London! If ye love your liberties or your skins, forward to London!

Crowd. Forward to London! A Wyatt! a Wyatt!
Wyatt. But first to Rochester, to take the guns
From out the vessels lying in the river.
Then on.
A Peasant. Ay, but I fear we be too few, Sir Thomas.
Wyatt. Not many yet. The world as yet, my friend,
Is not half-waked; but every parish tower
Shall clang and clash alarum as we pass,
And pour along the land, and swôll'n and fed
With indraughts and side-currents, in full force
Roll upon London.
Crowd. A Wyatt! a Wyatt! Forward!
Knyvett. Wyatt, shall we proclaim Elizabeth?
Wyatt. I'll think upon it, Knyvett.

Knyvett. Or Lady Jane?
Wyatt. No, poor soul; no.
Ah, gray old castle of Alington, green field
Beside the brimming Medway, it may chance
That I shall never look upon you more.
Knyvett. Come, now, you're sonnetting again.
Wyatt. Not I.
I'll have my head set higher in the state;
Or—if the Lord God will it—on the stake. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—GUILDHALL.

SIR THOMAS WHITE (The Lord Mayor), LORD WILLIAM HOWARD, SIR RALPH BAGENHALL, ALDERMEN *and* CITIZENS.

White. I trust the Queen comes hither with her guards.
Howard. Ay, all in arms.
[*Several of the citizens move hastily out of the hall.*
Why do they hurry out there?
White. My Lord, cut out the rotten from your apple,
Your apple eats the better. Let them go.
They go like those old Pharisees in John
Convicted by their conscience, arrant cowards,
Or tamperers with that treason out of Kent.
When will her Grace be here?
Howard. In some few minutes.
She will address your guilds and companies.
I have striven in vain to raise a man for her.
But help her in this exigency, make
Your city loyal, and be the mightiest man
This day in England.
White. I am Thomas White.
Few things have fail'd to which I set my will,
I do my most and best.
Howard. You know that after
The Captain Brett, who went with your train bands
To fight with Wyatt, had gone over to him
With all his men, the Queen in that distress
Sent Cornwallis and Hastings to the traitor,
Feigning to treat with him about her marriage—
Know too what Wyatt said.
White. He'd sooner be,
While this same marriage question was being argued,
Trusted than trust—the scoundrel—and demanded
Possession of her person and the Tower.
Howard. And four of her poor Council too, my Lord,
As hostages.
White. I know it. What do and
Say your Council at this hour?
Howard. I will trust you.
We fling ourselves on you, my Lord. The Council,
The Parliament as well, are troubled waters;
And yet like waters of the fen they know not
Which way to flow. All hangs on her address,
And upon you, Lord Mayor.
White. How look'd the city
When now you past it? Quiet?
Howard. Like our Council,
Your city is divided. As we past,
Some hail'd, some hiss'd us. There were citizens
Stood each before his shut-up booth, and look'd
As grim and grave as from a funeral.
And here a knot of ruffians all in rags,
With execrating execrable eyes,
Glared at the citizen. Here was a young mother,
Her face on flame, her red hair all blown back,
She shrilling 'Wyatt,' while the boy she held

Mimick'd and piped her 'Wyatt,' as red as she
In hair and cheek; and almost elbowing her,
So close they stood, another, mute as death,
And white as her own milk; her babe in arms
Had felt the faltering of his mother's heart,
And look'd as bloodless. Here a pious Catholic,
Mumbling and mixing up in his scared prayers
Heaven and earth's Maries; over his bow'd shoulder
Scowl'd that world-hated and world-hating beast,
A haggard Anabaptist. Many such groups.
The names of Wyatt, Elizabeth, Courtenay,
Nay the Queen's right to reign—'fore God, the rogues—
Were freely buzzed among them. So I say
Your city is divided, and I fear
One scruple, this or that way, of success
Would turn it thither. Wherefore now the Queen
In this low pulse and palsy of the state,
Bad me to tell you that she counts on you
And on myself as her two hands; on you,
In your own city, as her right, my Lord,
For you are loyal.

White. Am I Thomas White?
One word before she comes. Elizabeth—
Her name is much abused among these traitors.
Where is she? She is loved by all of us.
I scarce have heart to mingle in this matter,
If she should be mishar dled.

Howard. No; she shall not.
The Queen had written her ..rd to come to court:
Methought I smelt out Renard in the letter,
And fearing for her, sent a secret missive,
Which told her to be sick. Happily or not,
It found her sick indeed.

White. God send her well;
Here comes her Royal Grace.

Enter Guards, MARY, *and* GARDINER. SIR THOMAS WHITE *leads her to a raised seat on the daïs.*

White. I, the Lord Mayor, and these our companies
And guilds of London, gathered here, beseech
Your Highness to accept our lowliest thanks
For your most princely presence; and we pray
That we, your true and loyal citizens,
From your own royal lips, at once may know
The wherefore of this coming, and so learn
Your royal will, and do it.—I, Lord Mayor
Of London, and our guilds and companies.

Mary. In mine own person am I come to you,
To tell you what indeed ye see and know,
How traitorously these rebels out of Kent
Have made strong head against ourselves and you.
They would not have me wed the Prince of Spain;
That was their pretext—so they spake at first—
But we sent divers of our Council to them,
And by their answers to the question ask'd,
It doth appear this marriage is the least
Of all their quarrel.
They have betrayed the treason of their hearts:

Seek to possess our person, hold our Tower,
Place and displace our councillors, and use
Both us and them according as they will.
Now what I am ye know right well—your Queen;
To whom, when I was wedded to the realm
And the realm's laws (the spousal ring whereof,
Not ever to be laid aside, I wear
Upon this finger), ye did promise full
Allegiance and obedience to the death.
Ye know my father was the rightful heir
Of England, and his right came down to me,
Corroborate by your acts of Parliament:
And as ye were most loving unto him,
So doubtless will ye show yourselves to me.
Wherefore, ye will not brook that anyone
Should seize our person, occupy our state,
More specially a traitor so presumptuous
As this same Wyatt, who hath tamper'd with
A public ignorance, and, under color
Of such a cause as hath no color, seeks
To bend the laws to his own will, and yield
Full scope to persons rascal and forlorn,
To make free spoil and havoc of your goods.
Now as your Prince, I say,
I, that was never mother, cannot tell
How mothers love their children; yet, methinks,
A prince as naturally may love his people
As these their children; and be sure your Queen
So loves you, and so loving, needs must deem
This love by you return'd as heartily;
And thro' this common knot and bond of love,
Doubt not they will be speedily overthrown.
As to this marriage, ye shall understand
We made thereto no treaty of ourselves,
And set no foot theretoward unadvised
Of all our Privy Council; furthermore,
This marriage had the assent of those to whom
The king, my father, did commit his trust;
Who not alone esteem'd it honorable,
But for the wealth and glory of our realm,
And all our loving subjects, most expedient.
As to myself,
I am not so set on wedlock as to choose
But where I list, nor yet so amorous
That I must needs be husbanded; I thank God,
I have lived a virgin, and I noway doubt
But that with God's grace, I can live so still.
Yet if it might please God that I should leave
Some fruit of mine own body after me,
To be your king, ye would rejoice thereat,
And it would be your comfort, as I trust;
And truly, if I either thought or knew
This marriage should bring loss or danger to you,
My subjects, or impair in any way
This royal state of England, I would never
Consent thereto, nor marry while I live;
Moreover, if this marriage should not seem,
Before our own High Court of Parliament,
To be of rich advantage to our realm,
We will refrain, and not alone from this,

Likewise from any other, out of which
Looms the least chance of peril to our realm.
Wherefore be bold, and with your lawful Prince
Stand fast against our enemies and yours,
And fear them not. I fear them not. My Lord,
I leave Lord William Howard in your city,
To guard and keep you whole and safe from all
The spoil and sackage aim'd at by these rebels,
Who mouth and foam against the Prince of Spain.

Voices. Long live Queen Mary! Down with Wyatt! The Queen!

White. Three voices from our guilds and companies!
You are shy and proud like English-men, my masters,
And will not trust your voices. Understand:
Your lawful Prince hath come to cast herself
On loyal hearts and bosoms, hoped to fall
Into the wide-spread arms of fealty,
And finds you statues. Speak at once—and all!
For whom?
Our sovereign Lady by King Harry's will;
The Queen of England—or the Kentish Squire?
I know you loyal. Speak! in the name of God!
The Queen of England or the rabble of Kent?
The reeking dungfork master of the mace!
Your havings wasted by the scythe and spade—
Your rights and charters hobnail'd into slush—
Your houses fired—your gutters bubbling blood——

Acclamation. No! No! The Queen! the Queen!

White. Your Highness hears
This burst and bass of loyal harmony,
And how we each and all of us abhor
The venomous, bestial, devilish revolt
Of Thomas Wyatt. Hear us now make oath
To raise your Highness thirty thousand men,
And arm and strike as with one hand, and brush
This Wyatt from our shoulders, like a flea
That might have leapt upon us unawares.
Swear with me, noble fellow-citizens, all,
With all your trades, and guilds, and companies.

Citizens. We swear!

Mary. We thank your Lordship and your loyal city.

[*Exit* Mary *attended.*

White. I trust this day, thro' God, I have saved the crown.

First Alderman. Ay, so my Lord of Pembroke in command
Of all her force be safe; but there are doubts.

Second Alderman. I hear that Gardiner, coming with the Queen,
And meeting Pembroke, bent to his saddle-bow,
As if to win the man by flattering him.
Is he so safe to fight upon her side?

First Alderman. If not, there's no man safe.

White. Yes, Thomas White.
I am safe enough; no man need flatter me.

Second Alderman. Nay, no man need; but did you mark our Queen?
The color freely play'd into her face,
And the half sight which makes her look so stern,
Seem'd thro' that dim dilated world of hers,
To read our faces; I have never seen her
So queenly or so goodly.

White. Courage, sir,
That makes or man or woman look their goodliest.

Die like the torn fox dumb, but never whine
Like that poor heart, Northumberland, at the block.
Bagenhall. The man had children, and he whined for those.
Methinks most men are but poor-hearted, else
Should we so doat on courage, were it commoner?
The Queen stands up, and speaks for her own self;
And all men cry, She is queenly, she is goodly.
Yet she's no goodlier; tho' my Lord Mayor here,
By his own rule, he hath been so bold to-day,
Should look more goodly than the rest of us.
White. Goodly? I feel most goodly heart and hand,
And strong to throw ten Wyatts and all Kent.
Ha! ha! sir; but you jest; I love it: a jest
In time of danger shows the pulses even.
Be merry! yet, Sir Ralph, you look but sad.
I dare avouch you'd stand up for yourself,
Tho' all the world should bay like winter wolves.
Bagenhall. Who knows? the man is proven by the hour.
White. The man should make the hour, not this the man;
And Thomas White will prove this Thomas Wyatt,
And he will prove an Iden to this Cade,
And he will play the Walworth to this Wat;
Come, sirs, we prate; hence all—gather your men—
Myself must bustle. Wyatt comes to Southwark;
I'll have the drawbridge hewn into the Thames,
And see the citizens arm'd. Good day; good day. [*Exit* White.
Bagenhall. One of much outdoor bluster.
Howard. For all that,
Most honest, brave, and skilful; and his wealth
A fountain of perennial alms—his fault
So thoroughly to believe in his own self.
Bagenhall. Yet thoroughly to believe in one's own self,
So one's own self be thorough, were to do
Great things, my Lord.
Howard. It may be.
Bagenhall. I have heard
One of your Council fleer and jeer at him.
Howard. The nursery-cocker'd child will jeer at aught
That may seem strange beyond his nursery.
The statesman that shall jeer and fleer at men,
Makes enemies for himself and for his king;
And if he jeer not seeing the true man
Behind his folly, he is thrice the fool;
And if he see the man and still will jeer,
He is child and fool, and traitor to the State.
Who is he? let me shun him.
Bagenhall. Nay, my Lord,
He is damn'd enough already.
Howard. I must set
The guard at Ludgate. Fare you well, Sir Ralph.
Bagenhall. 'Who knows?' I am for England. But who knows,
That knows the Queen, the Spaniard, and the Pope,
Whether I be for Wyatt, or the Queen? [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—London Bridge.

Enter Sir Thomas Wyatt *and* Brett.

Wyatt. Brett, when the Duke of Norfolk moved against us

Thou cried'st 'A Wyatt!' and flying to our side
Left his all bare, for which I love thee, Brett.
Have for thine asking aught that I can give,
For thro' thine help we are come to London Bridge;
But how to cross it balks me. I fear we cannot.
Brett. Nay, hardly, save by boat, swimming, or wings.
Wyatt. Last night I climb'd into the gate-house, Brett,
And scared the gray old porter and his wife.
And then I crept along the gloom and saw
They had hewn the drawbridge down into the river.
It roll'd as black as death; and that same tide
Which, coming with our coming, seem'd to smile
And sparkle like our fortune as thou saidest,
Ran sunless down, and moan'd against the piers.
But o'er the chasm I saw Lord William Howard
By torchlight, and his guard; four guns gaped at me,
Black, silent mouths: had Howard spied me there
And made them speak, as well he might have done,
Their voice had left me none to tell you this.
What shall we do?
Brett. On somehow. To go back
Were to lose all.
Wyatt. On over London Bridge
We cannot: stay we cannot; there is ordnance
On the White Tower and on the Devil's Tower,
And pointed full at Southwark; we must round
By Kingston Bridge.
Brett. Ten miles about.
Wyatt. Ev'n so.
But I have notice from our partisans
Within the city that they will stand by us
If Ludgate can be reach'd by dawn to-morrow.

Enter one of WYATT'S *men.*

Man. Sir Thomas, I've found this paper; pray your worship read it; I know not my letters; the old priests taught me nothing.
Wyatt (*reads*). 'Whosoever will apprehend the traitor Thomas Wyatt shall have a hundred pounds for reward.'
Man. Is that it? That's a big lot of money.
Wyatt. Ay, ay, my friend; not read it? 'tis not written
Half plain enough. Give me a piece of paper!
[*Writes* 'THOMAS WYATT' *large.*
There, any man can read that.
[*Sticks it in his cap.*
Brett. But that's foolhardy.
Wyatt. No! boldness, which will give my followers boldness.

Enter MAN *with a prisoner.*

Man. We found him, your worship, a plundering o' Bishop Winchester's house; he say's he's a poor gentleman.
Wyatt. Gentleman! a thief! Go hang him. Shall we make
Those that we come to serve our sharpest foes?
Brett. Sir Thomas—
Wyatt. Hang him, I say.
Brett. Wyatt, but now you promised me a boon.
Wyatt. Ay, and I warrant this fine fellow's life,
Brett. Ev'n so; he was my neighbor once in Kent,
He's poor enough, has drunk and gambled out
All that he had, and gentleman he was.
We have been glad together; let him live.
Wyatt. He has gambled for his life, and lost, he hangs.

No, no, my word's my word. Take thy poor gentleman!
Gamble thyself at once out of my sight,
Or I will dig thee with my dagger. Away!
Women and children!

Enter a Crowd *of* WOMEN *and* Children.

First Woman. O Sir Thomas, Sir Thomas, pray you go away, Sir Thomas, or you'll make the White Tower a black 'un for us this blessed day. He'll be the death on us; and you'll set the Divil's Tower a-spitting, and he'll smash all our bits o' things worse than Philip o' Spain.

Second Woman. Don't ye now go to think that we be for Philip o' Spain.

Third Woman. No, we know that ye be come to kill the Queen, and we'll pray for you all on our bended knees. But o' God's mercy don't ye kill the Queen here, Sir Thomas; look ye, here's little Dickon, and little Robin, and little Jenny—though she's but a side-cousin—and all on our knees, we pray you to kill the Queen further off, Sir Thomas.

Wyatt. My friends, I have not come to kill the Queen
Or here or there: I come to save you all,
And I'll go further off.

Crowd. Thanks, Sir Thomas, we be beholden to you, and we'll pray for you on our bended knees till our lives' end.

Wyatt. Be happy, I am your friend. To Kingston, forward!

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.—ROOM IN THE GATE-HOUSE OF WESTMINSTER PALACE.

MARY, ALICE, GARDINER, RENARD, LADIES.

Gardiner. Their cry is, Philip never shall be king.

Mary. Lord Pembroke in command of all our force
Will front their cry and shatter them into dust.

Alice. Was not Lord Pembroke with Northumberland?
O madam, if this Pembroke should be false?

Mary. No, girl; most brave and loyal, brave and loyal.
His breaking with Northumberland broke Northumberland.
At the park gate he hovers with our guards.
These Kentish ploughmen cannot break the guards.

Enter MESSENGER.

Messenger. Wyatt, your Grace, hath broken thro' the guards
And gone to Ludgate.

Gardiner. Madam, I much fear
That all is lost; but we can save your Grace.
The river still is free. I do beseech you,
There yet is time, take boat and pass to Windsor.

Mary. I pass to Windsor and I lose my crown.

Gardiner. Pass, then, I pray your Highness, to the Tower.

Mary. I shall but be their prisoner in the Tower.

Cries without. The traitor! treason! Pembroke!

Ladies. Treason! treason!

Mary. Peace.
False to Northumberland, is he false to me?
Bear witness, Renard, that I live and die
The true and faithful bride of Philip
—A sound
Of feet and voices thickening hither—blows—
Hark, there is battle at the palace gates,
And I will out upon the gallery.

Ladies. No, no, your Grace; see there the arrows flying.

Mary. I am Harry's daughter, Tudor, and not Fear.

[*Goes out on the gallery.*

The guards are all driven in, skulk into corners
Like rabbits to their holes. A gracious guard
Truly; shame on them! they have shut the gates!

Enter SIR ROBERT SOUTHWELL.

Southwell. The porter, please your Grace, hath shut the gates
On friend and foe. Your gentlemen-at-arms,
If this be not your Grace's order, cry
To have the gates set wide again, and they
With their good battleaxes will do you right
Against all traitors.
Mary. They are the flower of England; set the gates wide.
[*Exit* Southwell.

Enter COURTENAY.

Courtenay. All lost, all lost, all yielded! A barge, a barge!
The Queen must to the Tower.
Mary. Whence come you, sir?
Courtenay. From Charing Cross; the rebels broke us there,
And I sped hither with what haste I might
To save my royal cousin.
Mary. Where is Pembroke?
Courtenay. I left him somewhere in the thick of it.
Mary. Left him and fled; and thou that wouldst be King,
And hast nor heart nor honor. I myself
Will down into the battle and there bide
The upshot of my quarrel, or die with those
That are no cowards and no Courtenays.
Courtenay. I do not love your Grace should call me coward.

Enter another MESSENGER.

Messenger. Over, your Grace, all crush'd; the brave Lord William
Thrust him from Ludgate, and the traitor flying
To Temple Bar, there by Sir Maurice Berkeley
Was taken prisoner.
Mary. To the Tower with *him!*
Messenger. 'Tis said he told Sir Maurice there was one
Cognizant of this, and party thereunto,
My Lord of Devon.
Mary. To the Tower with *him!*
Courtenay. O la, the Tower, the Tower, always the Tower,
I shall grow into it—I shall be the Tower.
Mary. Your Lordship may not have so long to wait.
Remove him!
Courtenay. La, to whistle out my life,
And carve my coat upon the walls again!
[*Exit* Courtenay *guarded.*
Messenger. Also this Wyatt did confess the Princess
Cognizant thereof, and party thereunto.
Mary. What? whom—whom did you say?
Messenger. Elizabeth,
Your Royal sister.
Mary. To the Tower with *her!*
My foes are at my feet and I am Queen.
[Gardiner *and her* Ladies *kneel to her.*
Gardiner (*rising*). There let them lie, your footstool! (*Aside.*) Can I strike
Elizabeth?—not now and save the life
Of Devon: if I save him, he and his
Are bound to me—may strike hereafter.
(*Aloud.*) Madam,
What Wyatt said, or what they said he said,
Cries of the moment and the street—
Mary. He said it.
Gardiner. Your courts of justice will determine that.
Renard (*advancing*). I trust by this your Highness will allow

Some spice of wisdom in my telling you,
When last we talk'd, that Philip would not come
Till Guildford Dudley and the Duke of Suffolk,
And Lady Jane had left us.
Mary. They shall die.
Renard. And your so loving sister?
Mary. She shall die.
My foes are at my feet, and Philip King. [*Exeunt.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—The Conduit in Grace-church,

Painted with the Nine Worthies, among them King Henry VIII. holding a book, on it inscribed 'Verbum Dei.'

Enter Sir Ralph Bagenhall *and* Sir Thomas Stafford.

Bagenhall. A hundred here and hundreds hang'd in Kent.
The tigress had unsheath'd her nails at last,
And Renard and the Chancellor sharpen'd them.
In every London street a gibbet stood.
They are down to-day. Here by this house was one;
The traitor husband dangled at the door,
And when the traitor wife came out for bread
To still the petty treason therewithin,
Her cap would brush his heels.
Stafford. It is Sir Ralph,
And muttering to himself as heretofore.
Sir, see you aught up yonder?
Bagenhall. I miss something.
The tree that only bears dead fruit is gone.
Stafford. What tree, sir?
Bagenhall. Well, the tree in Virgil, sir,
That bears not its own apples.
Stafford. What! the gallows?
Bagenhall. Sir, this dead fruit was ripening overmuch,
And had to be removed lest living Spain
Should sicken at dead England.
Stafford. Not so dead,
But that a shock may rouse her.
Bagenhall. I believe
Sir Thomas Stafford?
Stafford. I am ill disguised.
Bagenhall. Well, are you not in peril here?
Stafford. I think so.
I came to feel the pulse of England, whether
It beats hard at this marriage. Did you see it?
Bagenhall. Stafford, I am a sad man and a serious.
Far liefer had I in my country hall
Been reading some old book, with mine old hound
Couch'd at my hearth, and mine old flask of wine
Beside me, than have seen it: yet I saw it.
Stafford. Good, was it splendid?
Bagenhall. Ay, if Dukes, and Earls,
And Counts, and sixty Spanish cavaliers,
Some six or seven Bishops, diamonds, pearls,
That royal commonplace too, cloth of gold,
Could make it so.
Stafford. And what was Mary's dress?
Bagenhall. Good faith, I was too sorry for the woman
To mark the dress. She wore red shoes!
Stafford. Red shoes!
Bagenhall. Scarlet, as if her feet were wash'd in blood,
As if she had waded in it.
Stafford. Were your eyes
So bashful that you look'd no higher?
Bagenhall. A diamond,
And Philip's gift, as proof of Philip's love,
Who hath not any for any,—tho' a true one,

Blazed false upon her heart.
Stafford. But this proud Prince—
Bagenhall. Nay, he is King, you know, the King of Naples.
The father ceded Naples, that the son
Being a King, might wed a Queen,—O he
Flamed in brocade—white satin his trunk-hose,
Inwrought with silver,—on his neck a collar,
Gold, thick with diamonds; hanging down from this
The Golden Fleece—and round his knee, misplaced,
Our English Garter, studded with great emeralds,
Rubies, I know not what. Have you had enough
Of all this gear?
Stafford. Ay, since you hate the telling it.
How look'd the Queen?
Bagenhall. No fairer for her jewels.
And I could see that as the new-made couple
Came from the Minster, moving side by side
Beneath one canopy, ever and anon
She cast on him a vassal smile of love,
Which Philip with a glance of some distaste,
Or so methought, return'd. I may be wrong, sir.
This marriage will not hold.
Stafford. I think with you.
The King of France will help to break it.
Bagenhall. France!
We once had half of France, and hurl'd our battles
Into the heart of Spain; but England now
Is but a ball chuck'd between France and Spain,
His in whose hand she drops; Harry of Bolingbroke
Had holpen Richard's tottering throne to stand,
Could Harry have foreseen that all our nobles
Would perish on the civil slaughter-field,
And leave the people naked to the crown,
And the crown naked to the people; the crown
Female, too! Sir, no woman's regimen
Can save us. We are fallen, and as I think,
Never to rise again.
Stafford. You are too black-blooded.
I'd make a move myself to hinder that:
I know some lusty fellows there in France.
Bagenhall. You would but make us weaker, Thomas Stafford.
Wyatt was a good soldier, yet he fail'd,
And strengthen'd Philip.
Stafford. Did not his last breath
Clear Courtenay and the Princess from the charge
Of being his co-rebels?
Bagenhall. Ay, but then
What such a one as Wyatt says is nothing:
We have no men among us. The new Lords
Are quieted with their sop of Abbey-lands,
And ev'n before the Queen's face Gardiner buys them
With Philip's gold. All greed, no faith, no courage!
Why, ev'n the haughty prince, Northumberland,
The leader of our Reformation, knelt
And blubber'd like a lad, and on the scaffold
Recanted, and resold himself to Rome.
Stafford. I swear you do your country wrong, Sir Ralph.
I know a set of exiles over there,
Dare-devils, that would eat fire and spit it out
At Philip's beard: they pillage Spain already
The French King winks at it. An hour will come

When they will sweep her from the seas. No men?
Did not Lord Suffolk die like a true man?
Is not Lord William Howard a true man?
Yea, you yourself, altho' you are black-blooded:
And I, by God, believe myself a man.
Ay, even in the church there is a man —Cranmer.
Fly would he not, when all men bad him fly.
And what a letter he wrote against the Pope!
There's a brave man, if any.
Bagenhall. Ay; if it hold.
Crowd (*coming on*). God save their Graces!
Stafford. Bagenhall, I see
The Tudor green and white. (*Trumpets.*) They are coming now.
And here's a crowd as thick as herring-shoals.
Bagenhall. Be limpets to this pillar, or we are torn
Down the strong wave of brawlers.
Crowd. God save their Graces!
[*Procession of Trumpeters, Javelinmen, etc.; then Spanish and Flemish Nobles intermingled.*
Stafford. Worth seeing, Bagenhall! These black dog-Dons
Garb themselves bravely. Who's the long-face there,
Looks very Spain of very Spain?
Bagenhall. The Duke
Of Alva, an iron soldier.
Stafford. And the Dutchman,
Now laughing at some jest?
Bagenhall. William of Orange,
William the Silent.
Stafford. Why do they call him so?
Bagenhall. He keeps, they say, some secret that may cost
Philip his life.
Stafford. But then he looks so merry.
Bagenhall. I cannot tell you why they call him so.
[*The* King *and* Queen *pass, attended by Peers of the Realm, Officers of State, etc., Cannon shot off.*
Crowd. Philip and Mary, Philip and Mary!
Long live the King and Queen, Philip and Mary!
Stafford. They smile as if content with one another.
Bagenhall. A smile abroad is oft a scowl at home.
[King *and* Queen *pass on. Procession.*
First Citizen. I thought this Philip had been one of those black devils of Spain, but he hath a yellow beard.
Second Citizen. Not red like Iscariot's.
First Citizen. Like a carrot's, as thou say'st, and English carrot's better than Spanish licorice; but I thought he was a beast.
Third Citizen. Certain I had heard that every Spaniard carries a tail like a devil under his trunk-hose.
Tailor. Ay, but see what trunk-hoses! Lord! they be fine; I never stitch'd none such. They make amends for the tails.
Fourth Citizen. Tut! every Spanish priest will tell you that all English heretics have tails.
Fifth Citizen. Death and the Devil —if he find I have one—
Fourth Citizen. Lo! thou hast call'd them up! here they come—a pale horse for Death and Gardiner for the Devil.

Enter GARDINER (*turning back from the procession*).

Gardiner. Knave, wilt thou wear thy cap before the Queen.
Man. My Lord, I stand so squeezed among the crowd.
I cannot lift my hands unto my head.
Gardiner. Knock off his cap there, some of you about him!
See there be others that can use their hands.
Thou art one of Wyatt's men?
Man. No, my Lord, no.
Gardiner. Thy name, thou knave?

Man. I am nobody, my Lord.
Gardiner (*shouting*). God's passion! knave, thy name?
Man. I have ears to hear.
Gardiner. Ay, rascal, if I leave thee ears to hear.
Find out his name and bring it me (*to Attendant*).
Attendant. Ay, my Lord.
Gardiner. Knave, thou shalt lose thine ears and find thy tongue,
And shalt be thankful if I leave thee that.
[*Coming before the Conduit.*
The conduit painted—the nine worthies—ay!
But then what's here? King Harry with a scroll.
Ha—Verbum Dei—verbum—word of God!
God's passion! do you know the knave that painted it?
Attendant. I do, my Lord.
Gardiner. Tell him to paint it out,
And put some fresh device in lieu of it—
A pair of gloves, a pair of gloves, sir; ha?
There is no heresy there.
Attendant. I will, my Lord;
The man shall paint a pair of gloves. I am sure
(Knowing the man) he wrought it ignorantly,
And not from any malice.
Gardiner. Word of God
In English! over this the brainless loons
That cannot spell Esaïas from St. Paul,
Make themselves drunk and mad, fly out and flare
Into rebellions. I'll have their bibles burnt.
The bible is the priest's. Ay! fellow, what!
Stand staring at me! shout, you gaping rogue!
Man. I have, my Lord, shouted till I am hoarse.
Gardiner. What hast thou shouted, knave?
Man. Long live Queen Mary!
Gardiner. Knave, there be two. There be both King and Queen,
Philip and Mary. Shout!
Man. Nay, but, my Lord,
The Queen comes first, Mary and Philip.
Gardiner. Shout, then, Mary and Philip!
Man. Mary and Philip!
Gardiner. Now,
Thou hast shouted for thy pleasure, shout for mine!
Philip and Mary!
Man. Must it be so, my Lord?
Gardiner. Ay, knave.
Man. Philip and Mary!
Gardiner. I distrust thee.
Thine is a half voice and a lean assent.
What is thy name?
Man. Sanders.
Gardiner. What else?
Man. Zerubbabel.
Gardiner. Where dost thou live?
Man. In Cornhill.
Gardiner. Where, knave, where?
Man. Sign of the Talbot.
Gardiner. Come to me to-morrow.—
Rascal!—this land is like a hill of fire,
One crater opens when another shuts.
But so I get the laws against the heretic,
Spite of Lord Paget and Lord William Howard,
And others of our Parliament, revived,
I will show fire on my side—stake and fire—
Sharp work and short. The knaves are easily cow'd.
Follow their Majesties.
[*Exit. The crowd following.*
Bagenhall. As proud as Becket.
Stafford. You would not have him murder'd as Becket was?
Bagenhall. No—murder fathers murder: but I say
There is no man—there was one woman with us—
It was a sin to love her married, dead
I cannot choose but love her.
Stafford. Lady Jane?
Crowd (*going off*). God save their Graces!

Stafford. Did you see her die?
Bagenhall. No, no; her innocent blood had blinded me.
You call me too black-blooded—true enough
Her dark dead blood is in my heart with mine.
If ever I cry out against the Pope
Her dark dead blood that ever moves with mine
Will stir the living tongue and make the cry.
Stafford. Yet doubtless you can tell me how she died?
Bagenhall. Seventeen—and knew eight languages—in music
Peerless—her needle perfect, and her learning
Beyond the churchmen; yet so meek, so modest,
So wife-like humble to the trivial boy
Mismatch'd with her for policy! I have heard
She would not take a last farewell of him,
She fear'd it might unman him for his end.
She could not be unmann'd—no, nor outwoman'd—
Seventeen—a rose of grace!
Girl never breathed to rival such a rose;
Rose never blew that equall'd such a bud.
Stafford. Pray you go on.
Bagenhall. She came upon the scaffold,
And said she was condemn'd to die for treason;
She had but follow'd the device of those
Her nearest kin: she thought they knew the laws.
But for herself, she knew but little law,
And nothing of the titles to the crown;
She had no desire for that, and wrung her hands,
And trusted God would save her thro' the blood
Of Jesus Christ alone.
Stafford. Pray you go on.
Bagenhall. Then knelt and said the Miserere Mei—
But all in English, mark you; rose again,
And, when the headsman pray'd to be forgiven,
Said 'You will give me my true crown at last,
But do it quickly;' then all wept but she,
Who changed not color when she saw the block,
But ask'd him, childlike: 'Will you take it off
Before I lay me down?' 'No, madam,' he said,
Gasping; and when her innocent eyes were bound,
She, with her poor blind hands feeling —'where is it?
Where is it?'—You must fancy that which follow'd,
If you have heart to do it!
Crowd (*in the distance*). God save their Graces!
Stafford. Their Graces, our disgraces! God confound them!
Why, she's grown bloodier! when I last was here,
This was against her conscience—would be murder!
Bagenhall. The 'Thou shalt do no murder,' which God's hand
Wrote on her conscience, Mary rubb'd out pale—
She could not make it white—and over that,
Traced in the blackest text of Hell—'Thou shalt!'
And sign'd it—Mary!
Stafford. Philip and the Pope
Must have sign'd too. I hear this Legate's coming
To bring us absolution from the Pope.
The Lords and Commons will bow down before him—
You are of the house? what will you do, Sir Ralph?
Bagenhall. And why should I be bolder than the rest,
Or honester than all?
Stafford. But, sir, if I—

"BY THAT OLD BRIDGE WHICH, HALF IN RUINS THEN."—*Page 125.*

And oversea they say this state of yours
Hath no more mortice than a tower of cards;
And that a puff would do it—then if I
And others made that move I touch'd upon,
Back'd by the power of France, and landing here,
Came with a sudden splendor, shout, and show,
And dazzled men and deafen'd by some bright
Loud venture, and the people so unquiet—
And I the race of murder'd Buckingham—
Not for myself, but for the kingdom—Sir,
I trust that you would fight along with us.

Bagenhall. No; you would fling your lives into the gulf.

Stafford. But if this Philip, as he's like to do,
Left Mary a wife-widow here alone,
Set up a viceroy, sent his myriads hither
To seize upon the forts and fleet, and make us
A Spanish province; would you not fight then?

Bagenhall. I think I should fight then.

Stafford. I am sure of it.
Hist! there's the face coming on here of one
Who knows me. I must leave you. Fare you well,
You'll hear of me again.

Bagenhall. Upon the scaffold.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—Room in Whitehall Palace.

Mary. *Enter* Philip *and* Cardinal Pole.

Pole. Ave Maria, gratia plena,
Benedicta tu in mulieribus.

Mary. Loyal and royal cousin, humblest thanks.
Had you a pleasant voyage up the river?

Pole. We had your royal barge, and that same chair,
Or rather throne of purple, on the deck.
Our silver cross sparkled before the prow,
The ripples twinkled at their diamond-dance,
The boats that follow'd, were as glowing-gay
As regal gardens; and your flocks of swans,
As fair and white as angels; and your shores
Wore in mine eyes the green of Paradise.
My foreign friends, who dream'd us blanketed
In ever-closing fog, were much amazed
To find as fair a sun as might have flash'd
Upon their lake of Garda, fire the Thames;
Our voyage by sea was all but miracle;
And here the river flowing from the sea,
Not toward it (for they thought not of our tides),
Seem'd as a happy miracle to make glide—
In quiet—home your banish'd countryman.

Mary. We heard that you were sick in Flanders, cousin.

Pole. A dizziness.

Mary. And how came you round again?

Pole. The scarlet thread of Rahab saved her life;
And mine, a little letting of the blood.

Mary. Well? now?

Pole. Ay, cousin, as the heathen giant
Had but to touch the ground, his force return'd—
Thus, after twenty years of banishment,
Feeling my native land beneath my foot,

I said thereto: 'Ah, native land of mine,
Thou art much beholden to this foot of mine,
That hastes with full commission from the Pope
To absolve thee from thy guilt of heresy.
Thou hast disgraced me and attainted me,
And mark'd me ev'n as Cain, and I return
As Peter, but to bless thee: make me well.'
Methinks the good land heard me, for to-day
My heart beats twenty, when I see you, cousin.
Ah, gentle cousin, since your Herod's death,
How oft hath Peter knock'd at Mary's gate!
And Mary would have risen and let him in,
But, Mary, there were those within the house
Who would not have it.

Mary. True, good cousin Pole;
And there were also those without the house
Who would not have it.

Pole. I believe so, cousin.
State-policy and church-policy are conjoint,
But Janus-faces looking diverse ways.
I fear the Emperor much misvalued me.
But all is well; 'twas ev'n the will of God,
Who, waiting till the time had ripen'd, now,
Makes me his mouth of holy greeting. 'Hail,
Daughter of God, and saver of the faith.
Sit benedictus fructus ventris tui!'

Mary. Ah, heaven!

Pole. Unwell, your Grace?

Mary. No, cousin, happy—
Happy to see you; never yet so happy
Since I was crown'd.

Pole. Sweet cousin, you forget
That long low minster where you gave your hand
To this great Catholic King.

Philip. Well said, Lord Legate.

Mary. Nay, not well said; I thought of you, my liege,
Ev'n as I spoke.

Philip. Ay, Madam; my Lord Paget
Waits to present our Council to the Legate.
Sit down here, all; Madam, between us you.

Pole. Lo, now you are enclosed with boards of cedar,
Our little sister of the Song of Songs!
You are doubly fenced and shielded sitting here
Between the two most high-set thrones on earth,
The Emperor's highness happily symbol'd by
The King your husband, the Pope's Holiness
By mine own self.

Mary. True, cousin, I am happy.
When will you that we summon both our houses
To take this absolution from your lips,
And be regather'd to the Papal fold?

Pole. In Britain's calendar the brightest day
Beheld our rough forefathers break their Gods,
And clasp the faith in Christ; but after that
Might not St. Andrew's be her happiest day?

Mary. Then these shall meet upon St. Andrew's day.

Enter PAGET, *who presents the Council. Dumb show.*

Pole. I am an old man wearied with my journey,
Ev'n with my joy. Permit me to withdraw.
To Lambeth?

Philip. Ay, Lambeth has ousted Cranmer.

It was not meet the heretic swine should live
In Lambeth.
Mary. There or anywhere, or at all.
Philip. We have had it swept and garnish'd after him.
Pole. Not for the seven devils to enter in?
Philip. No, for we trust they parted in the swine.
Pole. True, and I am the Angel of the Pope.
Farewell, your Graces.
Philip. Nay, not here—to me;
I will go with you to the waterside.
Pole. Not be my Charon to the counterside?
Philip. No, my Lord Legate, the Lord Chancellor goes.
Pole. And unto no dead world; but Lambeth palace,
Henceforth a centre of the living faith.
[*Exeunt* Philip, Pole, Paget, *etc.*

Manet Mary.

Mary. He hath awaked! he hath awaked!
He stirs within the darkness!
Oh, Philip, husband! now thy love to mine
Will cling more close, and those bleak manners thaw,
That make me shamed and tongue-tied in my love.
The second Prince of Peace—
The great unborn defender of the Faith,
Who will avenge me of mine enemies—
He comes, and my star rises,
The stormy Wyatts and Northumberlands,
The proud ambitions of Elizabeth,
And all her fieriest partisans—are pale
Before my star!
The light of this new learning wanes and dies:
The ghost of Luther and Zuinglius fade
Into the deathless hell which is their doom
Before my star!
His sceptre shall go forth from Ind to Ind!
His sword shall hew the heretic peoples down!
His faith shall clothe the world that will be his,
Like universal air and sunshine! Open,
Ye everlasting gates! The King is here!—
My star, my son!

Enter Philip, Duke of Alva, *etc.*

Oh, Philip, come with me;
Good news have I to tell you, news to make
Both of us happy—ay, the Kingdom too.
Nay come with me—one moment!
Philip (*to* Alva). More than that:
There was one here of late—William the Silent
They call him—he is free enough in talk,
But tells me nothing. You will be, we trust,
Sometime the viceroy of those provinces—
He must deserve his surname better.
Alva. Ay, sir;
Inherit the Great Silence.
Philip. True; the provinces
Are hard to rule and must be hardly ruled;
Most fruitful, yet, indeed, an empty rind,
All hollow'd out with stinging heresies;
And for their heresies, Alva, they will fight;
You must break them or they break you.
Alva (*proudly*). The first.
Philip. Good!
Well, Madam, this new happiness of mine? [*Exeunt.*

Enter Three Pages.

First Page. News, mates! a miracle, a miracle! news!

The bells must ring; Te Deums must be sung;
The Queen hath felt the motion of her babe!
Second Page. Ay; but see here!
First Page. See what?
Second Page. This paper, Dickon.
I found it fluttering at the palace gates:—
'The Queen of England is delivered of a dead dog!'
Third Page. These are the things that madden her. Fie upon it!
First Page. Ay; but I hear she hath a dropsy, lad,
Or a high-dropsy, as the doctors call it.
Third Page. Fie on her dropsy, so she have a dropsy!
I know that she was ever sweet to me.
First Page. For thou and thine are Roman to the core.
Third Page. So thou and thine must be. Take heed!
First Page. Not I,
And whether this flash of news be false or true,
So the wine run, and there be revelry,
Content am I. Let all the steeples clash,
Till the sun dance, as upon Easter Day. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—Great Hall in Whitehall.

At the far end a dias. On this three chairs, two under one canopy for Mary *and* Philip, *another on the right of these for* Pole. *Under the dais on* Pole's *side, ranged along the wall, sit all the Spiritual Peers, and along the wall opposite, all the Temporal. The Commons on cross benches in front, a line of approach to the dais between them. In the foreground,* Sir Ralph Bagenhall *and other* Members *of the* Commons.

First Member. St. Andrew's day; sit close, sit close, we are friends.
Is reconciled the word? the Pope again?
It must be thus; and yet, cocksbody! how strange
That Gardiner, once so one with all of us
Against this foreign marriage, should have yielded
So utterly!—strange! but stranger still that he,
So fierce against the Headship of the Pope,
Should play the second actor in this pageant
That brings him in; such a cameleon he!
Second Member. This Gardiner turn'd his coat in Henry's time;
The serpent that hath slough'd will slough again.
Third Member. Tut, then we all are serpents.
Second Member. Speak for yourself.
Third Member. Ay, and for Gardiner! being English citizen,
How should he bear a bridegroom out of Spain?
The Queen would have him! being English churchman
How should he bear the headship of the Pope?
The Queen would have it! Statesmen that are wise
Shape a necessity, as a sculptor clay,
To their own model.
Second Member. Statesmen that are wise
Take truth herself for model. What say you?
[*To* Sir Ralph Bagenhall.
Bagenhall. We talk and talk.
First Member. Ay, and what use to talk?
Philip's no sudden alien—the Queen's husband,
He's here, and king, or will be—yet cocksbody!
So hated here! I watch'd a hive of late;
My seven-years' friend was with me, my young boy;
Out crept a wasp, with half the swarm behind.

'Philip!' says he. I had to cuff the rogue
For infant treason.
Third Member. But they say that bees,
If any creeping life invade their hive
Too gross to be thrust out, will build him round,
And bind him in from harming of their combs.
And Philip by these articles is bound
From stirring hand or foot to wrong the realm.
Second Member. By bonds of bees-wax, like your creeping thing;
But your wise bees had stung him first to death.
Third Member. Hush, hush!
You wrong the Chancellor: the clauses added
To that same treaty which the emperor sent us
Were mainly Gardiner's: that no foreigner
Hold office in the household, fleet, forts, army;
That if the Queen should die without a child,
The bond between the kingdoms be dissolved;
That Philip should not mix us any way
With his French wars—
Second Member. Ay, ay, but what security,
Good sir, for this, if Philip——
Third Member. Peace—the Queen,
Philip, and Pole. [*All rise, and stand.*

Enter MARY, PHILIP, *and* POLE.

[Gardiner *conducts them to the three chairs of state.* Philip *sits on the* Queen's *left*, Pole *on her right.*
Gardiner. Our short-lived sun, before his winter plunge,
Laughs at the last red leaf, and Andrew's Day.
Mary. Should not this day be held in after years
More solemn than of old?
Philip. Madam, my wish
Echoes your Majesty's.
Pole. It shall be so.
Gardiner. Mine echoes both your Grace's; (*aside*) but the Pope—
Can we not have the Catholic church as well
Without as with the Italian? if we cannot,
Why then the Pope.
My lords of the upper house,
And ye, my masters, of the lower house,
Do ye stand fast by that which ye resolved?
Voices. We do.
Gardiner. And be you all one mind to supplicate
The Legate here for pardon, and acknowledge
The primacy of the Pope?
Voices. We are all one mind.
Gardiner. Then must I play the vassal to this Pole. [*Aside.*
[*He draws a paper from under his robes and presents it to the* King *and* Queen, *who look through it and return it to him; then ascends a tribune, and reads.*
We, the Lords Spiritual and Temporal,
And Commons here in Parliament assembled,
Presenting the whole body of this realm
Of England, and dominions of the same,
Do make most humble suit unto your Majesties,
In our own name and that of all the state,
That by your gracious means and intercession
Our supplication be exhibited
To the Lord Cardinal Pole, sent here as Legate
From our most Holy Father Julius, Pope,
And from the Apostolic see of Rome;
And do declare our penitence and grief
For our long schism and disobedience,
Either in making laws and ordinances

Against the Holy Father's primacy,
Or else by doing or by speaking aught
Which might impugn or prejudice the same;
By this our supplication promising,
As well for our own selves as all the realm,
That now we be and ever shall be quick,
Under and with your Majesties' authorities,
To do to the utmost all that in us lies
Towards the abrogation and repeal
Of all such laws and ordinances made;
Whereon we humbly pray your Majesties,
As persons undefiled with our offence,
So to set forth this humble suit of ours
That we the rather by your intercession
May from the Apostolic see obtain,
Thro' this most reverend Father, absolution,
And full release from danger of all censures
Of Holy Church that we be fall'n into,
So that we may, as children penitent,
Be once again received into the bosom
And unity of Universal Church;
And that this noble realm thro' after years
May in this unity and obedience
Unto the holy see and reigning Pope
Serve God and both your Majesties.

Voices. Amen. [*All sit.*

[*He again presents the petition to the* King *and* Queen, *who hand it reverentially to* Pole.

Pole (*sitting*). This is the loveliest day that ever smiled
On England. All her breath should, incenselike,
Rise to the heavens in grateful praise of Him
Who now recalls her to His ancient fold.
Lo! once again God to this realm hath given
A token of His more especial Grace;
For as this people were the first of all
The islands call'd into the dawning church
Out of the dead, deep night of heathendom,
So now are these the first whom God hath given
Grace to repent and sorrow for their schism;
And if your penitence be not mockery,
Oh how the blessed angels who rejoice
Over one saved do triumph at this hour
In the reborn salvation of a land
So noble. [*A pause.*
For ourselves we do protest
That our commission is to heal, not harm;
We come not to condemn, but reconcile;
We come not to compel, but call again;
We come not to destroy, but edify;
Nor yet to question things already done;
These are forgiven—matters of the past—
And range with jetsam and with offal thrown
Into the blind sea of forgetfulness.
[*A pause.*
Ye have reversed the attainder laid on us
By him who sack'd the house of God; and we,
Amplier than any field on our poor earth
Can render thanks in fruit for being sown,
Do here and now repay you sixty-fold,
A hundred, yea, a thousand thousand-fold,
With heaven for earth.

[*Rising and stretching forth his hands. All kneel but* Sir Ralph Bagenhall, *who rises and remains standing.*

The Lord who hath redeem'd us
With His own blood, and wash'd us from our sins,
To purchase for Himself a stainless bride;

He, whom the Father hath appointed Head
Of all his church, He by His mercy absolve you! [*A pause.*
And we by that authority Apostolic
Given unto us, his Legate, by the Pope,
Our Lord and Holy Father, Julius,
God's Vicar and Vicegerent upon earth,
Do here absolve you and deliver you
And every one of you, and all the realm
And its dominions from all heresy,
All schism, and from all and every censure,
Judgment, and pain accruing thereupon;
And also we restore you to the bosom
And unity of Universal Church.
[*Turning to* Gardiner.
Our letters of commission will declare this plainleir.
[Queen *heard sobbing. Cries of* Amen! Amen! *Some of the* Members *embrace one another. All but* Sir Ralph Bagenhall *pass out into the neighboring chapel whence is heard the Te Deum.*

Bagenhall. We strove against the papacy from the first,
In William's time, in our first Edward's time,
And in my master Henry's time; but now,
The unity of Universal Church,
Mary would have it; and this Gardiner follows;
The unity of Universal Hell,
Philip would have it; and this Gardiner follows!
A Parliament of imitative apes!
Sheep at the gap which Gardiner takes, who not
Believes the Pope, nor any of them believe—
These spaniel-Spaniard English of the time,
Who rub their fawning noses in the dust,
For that is Philip's gold-dust, and adore
This Vicar of their Vicar. Would I had been
Born Spaniard! I had held my head up then.
I am ashamed that I am Bagenhall, English.

Enter Officer.

Officer. Sir Ralph Bagenhall!
Bagenhall. What of that?
Officer. You were the one sole man in either house
Who stood upright when both the houses fell.
Bagenhall. The houses fell!
Officer. I mean the houses knelt
Before the Legate.
Bagenhall. Do not scrimp your phrase,
But stretch it wider; say when England fell.
Officer. I say you were the one sole man who stood.
Bagenhall. I am the one sole man in either house,
Perchance in England, loves her like a son.
Officer. Well, you one man, because you stood upright,
Her Grace the Queen commands you to the Tower.
Bagenhall. As traitor, or as heretic, or for what?
Officer. If any man in any way would be
The one man, he shall be so to his cost.
Bagenhall. What! will she have my head?
Officer. A round fine likelier.
Your pardon. [*Calling to Attendant.*
By the river to the Tower.
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV. — Whitehall. A Room in the Palace.

Mary, Gardiner, Pole, Paget, Bonner, *etc.*

Mary. The King and I, my Lords, now that all traitors

Against our royal state have lost the heads
Wherewith they plotted in their treasonous malice,
Have talk'd together, and are well agreed
That those old statutes touching Lollardism
To bring the heretic to the stake, should be
No longer a dead letter, but requicken'd.
One of the Council. Why, what hath fluster'd Gardiner? how he rubs
His forelock!
Paget. I have changed a word with him
In coming, and may change a word again.
Gardiner. Madam, your Highness is our sun, the King
And you together our two suns in one;
And so the beams of both may shine upon us,
The faith that seem'd to droop will feel your light,
Lift head, and flourish; yet not light alone,
There must be heat—there must be heat enough
To scorch and wither heresy to the root.
For what saith Christ? 'Compel them to come in.'
And what saith Paul? 'I would they were cut off
That trouble you.' Let the dead letter live!
Trace it in fire, that all the louts to whom
Their A B C is darkness, clowns and grooms
May read it! so you quash rebellion too,
For heretic and traitor are all one:
Two vipers of one breed—an amphisbæna,
Each end a sting: Let the dead letter burn!
Paget. Yet there be some disloyal Catholics,
And many heretics loyal; heretic throats
Cried no God-bless-her to the Lady Jane,
But shouted in Queen Mary. So there be
Some traitor-heretic, there is axe and cord.
To take the lives of others that are loyal,
And by the churchman's pitiless doom of fire,
Were but a thankless policy in the crown,
Ay, and against itself; for there are many.
Mary. If we could burn out heresy, my Lord Paget,
We reck not tho' we lost this crown of England—
Ay! tho' it were ten Englands!
Gardiner. Right, your Grace.
Paget, you are all for this poor life of ours,
And care but little for the life to be.
Paget. I have some time, for curiousness, my Lord,
Watch'd children playing at *their* life to be,
And cruel at it, killing helpless flies;
Such is our time—all times for aught I know.
Gardiner. We kill the heretics that sting the soul—
They, with right reason, flies that prick the flesh.
Paget. They had not reach'd right reason; little children!
They kill'd but for their pleasure and the power
They felt in killing.
Gardiner. A spice of Satan, ha!
Why, good! what then? granted!—we are fallen creatures;
Look to your Bible, Paget! we are fallen.
Paget. I am but of the laity, my Lord Bishop,
And may not read your Bible, yet I found
One day, a wholesome scripture, 'Little children,
Love one another.'
Gardiner. Did you find a scripture,
'I come not to bring peace but a sword'? The sword

Is in her Grace's hand to smite with.
Paget,
You stand up here to fight for heresy,
You are more than guess'd at as a heretic,
And on the steep-up track of the true faith
Your lapses are far seen.
Paget. The faultless Gardiner!
Mary. You brawl beyond the question; speak, Lord Legate!
Pole. Indeed, I cannot follow with your Grace:
Rather would say—the shepherd doth not kill
The sheep that wander from his flock, but sends
His careful dog to bring them to the fold.
Look to the Netherlands, wherein have been
Such holocausts of heresy! to what end?
For yet the faith is not established there.
Gardiner. The end's not come.
Pole. No—nor this way will come,
Seeing there lie two ways to every end,
A better and a worse—the worse is here
To persecute, because to persecute
Makes a faith hated, and is furthermore
No perfect witness of a perfect faith
In him who persecutes: when men are tost
On tides of strange opinion, and not sure
Of their own selves, they are wroth with their own selves,
And thence with others; then, who lights the faggot?
Not the full faith, no, but the lurking doubt.
Old Rome, that first made martyrs in the Church,
Trembled for her own gods, for these were trembling—
But when did our Rome tremble?
Paget. Did she not
In Henry's time and Edward's?
Pole. What, my Lord!
The Church on Peter's rock? never! I have seen
A pine in Italy that cast its shadow
Athwart a cataract; firm stood the pine—
The cataract shook the shadow. To my mind,
The cataract typed the headlong plunge and fall
Of heresy to the pit: the pine was Rome.
You see, my Lords,
It was the shadow of the Church that trembled;
Your church was but the shadow of a church,
Wanting the Papal mitre.
Gardiner (*muttering*). Here be tropes.
Pole. And tropes are good to clothe a naked truth,
And make it look more seemly.
Gardiner. Tropes again!
Pole. You are hard to please. Then without tropes, my Lord,
An overmuch severeness, I repeat,
When faith is wavering makes the waverer pass
Into more settled hatred of the doctrines
Of those who rule, which hatred by and by
Involves the ruler (thus there springs to light
That Centaur of a monstrous Common-weal,
The traitor-heretic) then tho' some may quail,
Yet others are that dare the stake and fire,
And their strong torment bravely borne, begets
An admiration and an indignation,
And hot desire to imitate; so the plague
Of schism spreads; were there but three or four
Of these misleaders, yet I would not say
Burn! and we cannot burn whole towns; they are many,
As my Lord Paget says.
Gardiner. Yet my Lord Cardinal—

Pole. I am your Legate; please you let me finish.
Methinks that under our Queen's regimen
We might go softlier than with crimson rowel
And streaming lash. When Herod-Henry first
Began to batter at your English Church,
This was the cause, and hence the judgment on her.
She seethed with such adulteries, and the lives
Of many among your churchmen were so foul
That heaven wept and earth blush'd. I would advise
That we should thoroughly cleanse the Church within
Before these bitter statutes be requicken'd.
So after that when she once more is seen
White as the light, the spotless bride of Christ,
Like Christ himself on Tabor, possibly
The Lutheran may be won to her again;
Till when, my Lords, I counsel tolerance.

Gardiner. What, if a mad dog bit your hand, my Lord,
Would you not chop the bitten finger off,
Lest your whole body should madden with the poison?
I would not, were I Queen, tolerate the heretic,
No, not an hour. The ruler of a land
Is bounden by his power and place to see
His people be not poison'd. Tolerate them!
Why? do they tolerate you? Nay, many of them
Would burn—have burnt each other; call they not
The one true faith, a loathsome idol-worship?
Beware, Lord Legate, of a heavier crime
Than heresy is itself; beware, I say,
Lest men accuse you of indifference
To all faiths, all religion; for you know
Right well that you yourself have been supposed
Tainted with Lutheranism in Italy.

Pole (*angered*). But you, my Lord, beyond all supposition,
In clear and open day were congruent
With that vile Cranmer in the accursed lie
Of good Queen Catharine's divorce—the spring
Of all those evils that have flow'd upon us;
For you yourself have truckled to the tyrant,
And done your best to bastardize our Queen,
For which God's righteous judgment fell upon you
In your five years of imprisonment, my Lord,
Under young Edward. Who so bolster'd up
The gross King's headship of the Church, or more
Denied the Holy Father!

Gardiner. Ha! what! eh?
But you, my Lord, a polish'd gentleman,
A bookman, flying from the heat and tussle,
You lived among your vines and oranges,
In your soft Italy yonder! You were sent for,
You were appeal'd to, but you still preferr'd
Your learned leisure. As for what I did
I suffer'd and repented. You, Lord Legate
And Cardinal-Deacon, have not now to learn
That ev'n St. Peter in his time of fear
Denied his Master, ay, and thrice, my Lord.

Pole. But not for five-and-twenty years, my Lord.

Gardiner. Ha! good! it seems then I was summon'd hither

But to be mock'd and baited. Speak, friend Bonner,
And tell this learned Legate he lacks zeal.
The Church's evil is not as the King's,
Cannot be heal'd by stroking. The mad bite
Must have the cautery—tell him—and at once.
What would'st thou do hadst thou his power, thou
That layest so long in heretic bonds with me;
Would'st thou not burn and blast them root and branch?

Bonner. Ay, after you, my Lord.

Gardiner. Nay, God's passion, before me! speak!

Bonner. I am on fire until I see them flame.

Gardiner. Ay, the psalm-singing weavers, cobblers, scum—
But this most noble prince Plantagenet,
Our good Queen's cousin—dallying over seas
Even when his brother's, nay, his noble mother's,
Head fell—

Pole. Peace, madman!

Thou stirrest up a grief thou canst not fathom.
Thou Christian Bishop, thou Lord Chancellor
Of England! no more rein upon thine anger
Than any child! Thou mak'st me much ashamed
That I was for a moment wroth at thee.

Mary. I come for counsel and ye give me feuds,
Like dogs that set to watch their master's gate,
Fall, when the thief is ev'n within the walls,
To worrying one another. My Lord Chancellor,
You have an old trick of offending us;
And but that you are art and part with us
In purging heresy, well we might, for this
Your violence and much roughness to the Legate,
Have shut you from our counsels. Cousin Pole,
You are fresh from brighter lands. Retire with me.
His Highness and myself (so you allow us)
Will let you learn in peace and privacy
What power this cooler sun of England hath
In breeding godless vermin. And pray Heaven
That you may see according to our sight.
Come, cousin.

[*Exeunt* Queen *and* Pole, *etc.*

Gardiner. Pole has the Plantagenet face,
But not the force made them our mightiest kings.
Fine eyes—but melancholy, irresolute—
A fine beard, Bonner, a very full fine beard.
But a weak mouth, an indeterminate—ha?

Bonner. Well, a weak mouth, perchance.

Gardiner. And not like thine
To gorge a heretic whole, roasted or raw.

Bonner. I'd do my best, my Lord; but yet the Legate
Is here as Pope and Master of the Church,
And if he go not with you—

Gardiner. Tut, Master Bishop,
Our bashful Legate, saw'st not how he flush'd?
Touch him upon his old heretical talk,
He'll burn a diocese to prove his orthodoxy.
And let him call me truckler. In those times,
Thou knowest we had to dodge, or duck, or die;
I kept my head for use of Holy Church;
And see you, we shall have to dodge again,

And let the Pope trample our rights, and plunge
His foreign fist into our island Church
To plump the leaner pouch of Italy.
For a time, for a time.
Why? that these statutes may be put in force,
And that his fan may thoroughly purge his floor.
Bonner. So then you hold the Pope—
Gardiner. I hold the Pope!
What do I hold him? what do I hold the Pope?
Come, come, the morsel stuck—this Cardinal's fault—
I have gulpt it down. I am wholly for the Pope,
Utterly and altogether for the Pope,
The Eternal Peter of the changeless chair,
Crown'd slave of slaves, and mitred king of kings,
God upon earth! what more? what would you have?
Hence, let's be gone.

Enter USHER.

Usher. Well that you be not gone,
My Lord. The Queen, most wroth at first with you,
Is now content to grant you full forgiveness,
So that you crave full pardon of the Legate.
I am sent to fetch you.
Gardiner. Doth Pole yield, sir, ha!
Did you hear 'em? were you by?
Usher. I cannot tell you,
His bearing is so courtly-delicate;
And yet methinks he falters: their two Graces
Do so dear-cousin and royal-cousin him,
So press on him the duty which as Legate
He owes himself, and with such royal smiles—
Gardiner. Smiles that burn men. Bonner, it will be carried.
He falters, ha? 'fore God, we change and change;
Men now are bow'd and old, the doctors tell you,
At three-score years; then if we change at all
We needs must do it quickly; it is an age
Of brief life, and brief purpose, and brief patience,
As I have shown to-day. I am sorry for it
If Pole be like to turn. Our old friend Cranmer,
Your more especial love, hath turn'd so often,
He knows not where he stands, which, if this pass,
We two shall have to teach him; let 'em look to it,
Cranmer and Hooper, Ridley and Latimer,
Rogers and Ferrar, for their time is come,
Their hour is hard at hand, their 'dies Iræ,'
Their 'dies Illa,' which will test their sect.
I feel it but a duty—you will find in it
Pleasure as well as duty, worthy Bonner,—
To test their sect. Sir, I attend the Queen
To crave most humble pardon—of her most
Royal, Infallible, Papal Legate-cousin.
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE V.—WOODSTOCK.

ELIZABETH, LADY IN WAITING.

Elizabeth. So they have sent poor Courtenay over sea.
Lady. And banish'd us to Woodstock, and the fields.
The colors of our Queen are green and white,
These fields are only green, they make me gape.
Elizabeth. There's whitethorn, girl.
Lady. Ay, for an hour in May.
But court is always May, buds out in masques,

Breaks into feather'd merriments, and flowers
In silken pageants. Why do they keep us here?
Why still suspect your Grace?
Elizabeth. Hard upon both.
[*Writes on the window with a diamond.*

Much suspected, of me
Nothing proven can be.
Quoth Elizabeth, prisoner.

Lady. What hath your Highness written?
Elizabeth. A true rhyme.
Lady. Cut with a diamond; so to last like truth.
Elizabeth. Ay, if truth last.
Lady. But truth, they say, will out,
So it must last. It is not like a word,
That comes and goes in uttering.
Elizabeth. Truth, a word!
The very Truth and very Word are one.
But truth of story, which I glanced at girl,
Is like a word that comes from olden days,
And passes thro' the peoples: every tongue
Alters it passing, till it spells and speaks
Quite other than at first.
Lady. I do not follow.
Elizabeth. How many names in the long sweep of time
That so foreshortens greatness, may but hang
On the chance mention of some fool that once
Brake bread with us, perhaps: and my poor chronicle
Is but of glass. Sir Henry Bedingfield
May split it for a spite.
Lady. God grant it last,
And witness to your Grace's innocence,
Till doomsday melt it.
Elizabeth. Or a second fire,
Like that which lately crackled underfoot
And in this very chamber, fuse the glass,
And char us back again into the dust
We spring from. Never peacock against rain
Scream'd as you did for water.
Lady. And I got it.
I woke Sir Henry—and he's true to you—
I read his honest horror in his eyes.
Elizabeth. Or true to you?
Lady. Sir Henry Bedingfield!
I will have no man true to me, your Grace,
But one that pares his nails; to me? the clown!
Elizabeth. Out, girl! you wrong a noble gentleman.
Lady. For, like his cloak, his manners want the nap
And gloss of court; but of this fire he says,
Nay swears, it was no wicked wilfulness,
Only a natural chance.
Elizabeth. A chance—perchance
One of those wicked wilfuls that men make,
Nor shame to call it nature. Nay, I know
They hunt my blood. Save for my daily range
Among the pleasant fields of Holy Writ
I might despair. But there hath some one come;
The house is all in movement. Hence, and see. [*Exit* Lady.

Milkmaid (*singing without*).

Shame upon you, Robin,
Shame upon you now!
Kiss me would you? with my hands
Milking the cow?
Daisies grow again,
Kingcups blow again,
And you came and kiss'd me milking the cow.

Robin came behind me,
Kiss'd me well I vow;
Cuff him could I? with my hands
Milking the cow?
Swallows fly again,

Cuckoos cry again,
And you came and kiss'd me milking the cow.

Come, Robin, Robin,
Come and kiss me now;
Help it can I? with my hands
Milking the cow?
Ringdoves coo again,
All things woo again.
Come behind and kiss me milking the cow!

Elizabeth. Right honest and red-cheek'd; Robin was violent,
And she was crafty—a sweet violence,
And a sweet craft. I would I were a milkmaid,
To sing, love, marry, churn, brew, bake, and die,
Then have my simple headstone by the church,
And all things lived and ended honestly.
I could not if I would. I am Harry's daughter:
Gardiner would have my head. They are not sweet,
The violence and the craft that do divide
The world of nature; what is weak must lie;
The lion needs but roar to guard his young;
The lapwing lies, says 'here' when they are there.
Threaten the child; 'I'll scourge you if you did it:'
What weapon hath the child, save his soft tongue,
To say 'I did not?' and my rod's the block.
I never lay my head upon the pillow
But that I think, 'Wilt thou lie there to-morrow?'
How oft the falling axe, that never fell,
Hath shock'd me back into the day-light truth
That it may fall to-day! Those damp, black, dead
Nights in the Tower; dead—with the fear of death
Too dead ev'n for a death-watch! Toll of a bell,
Stroke of a clock, the scurrying of a rat
Affrighted me, and then delighted me,
For there was life—And there was life in death—
The little murder'd princes, in a pale light,
Rose hand in hand, and whisper'd, 'come away!
The civil wars are gone for evermore:
Thou last of all the Tudors, come away!
With us is peace!' The last? It was a dream;
I must not dream, not wink, but watch. She has gone,
Maid Marian to her Robin—by and by
Both happy! a fox may filch a hen by night,
And make a morning outcry in the yard;
But there's no Renard here to 'catch her tripping.'
Catch me who can; yet, sometime I have wish'd
That I were caught, and kill'd away at once
Out of the flutter. The gray rogue, Gardiner,
Went on his knees, and pray'd me to confess
In Wyatt's business, and to cast myself
Upon the good Queen's mercy; ay, when, my Lord?
God save the Queen! My jailor—

Enter SIR HENRY BEDINGFIELD.

Bedingfield. One, whose bolts,
That jail you from free life, bar you from death.
There haunt some Papist ruffians hereabout
Would murder you.
Elizabeth. I thank you heartily, sir,
But I am royal, tho' your prisoner,
And God hath blest or cursed me with a nose—
Your boots are from the horses.
Bedingfield. Ay, my Lady.

When next there comes a missive from the Queen
It shall be all my study for one hour
To rose and lavender my horsiness,
Before I dare to glance upon your Grace.
Elizabeth. A missive from the Queen: last time she wrote,
I had like to have lost my life: it takes my breath:
O God, sir, do you look upon your boots,
Are you so small a man? Help me: what think you,
Is it life or death?
Bedingfield. I thought not on my boots;
The devil take all boots were ever made
Since man went barefoot. See, I lay it here,
For I will come no nearer to your Grace;
[*Laying down the letter.*
And, whether it bring you bitter news or sweet,
And God hath given your Grace a nose, or not,
I'll help you, if I may.
Elizabeth. Your pardon, then;
It is the heat and narrowness of the cage
That makes the captive testy; with free wing
The world were all one Araby. Leave me now,
Will you, companion to myself, sir?
Bedingfield. Will I?
With most exceeding willingness, I will;
You know I never come till I be call'd. [*Exit.*
Elizabeth. It lies there folded: is there venom in it?
A snake—and if I touch it, it may sting.
Come, come, the worst!
Best wisdom is to know the worst at once. [*Reads:*

'It is the King's wish, that you should wed Prince Philibert of Savoy. You are to come to Court on the instant; and think of this in your coming.

'MARY THE QUEEN.'

Think! I have many thoughts;
I think there may be birdlime here for me;
I think they fain would have me from the realm;
I think the Queen may never bear a child;
I think that I may be some time the Queen,
Then, Queen indeed: no foreign prince or priest
Should fill my throne, myself upon the steps.
I think I will not marry anyone,
Specially not this landless Philibert
Of Savoy; but, if Philip menace me,
I think that I will play with Philibert,—
As once the Holy Father did with mine,
Before my father married my good mother,—
For fear of Spain.

Enter LADY.

Lady. O Lord! your Grace, your Grace,
I feel so happy: it seems that we shall fly
These bald, blank fields, and dance into the sun
That shines on princes.
Elizabeth. Yet, a moment since,
I wish'd myself the milkmaid singing here,
To kiss and cuff among the birds and flowers—
A right rough life and healthful.
Lady. But the wench
Hath her own troubles; she is weeping now;
For the wrong Robin took her at her word.
Then the cow kick'd, and all her milk was spilt.
Your Highness such a milkmaid?
Elizabeth. I had kept
My Robins and my cows in sweeter order

Had I been such.
Lady (*slyly*). And had your Grace a Robin?
Elizabeth. Come, come, you are chill here; you want the sun
That shines at court; make ready for the journey.
Pray God, we 'scape the sunstroke. Ready at once. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE VI.—LONDON. A ROOM IN THE PALACE.

LORD PETRE *and* LORD WILLIAM HOWARD.

Petre. You cannot see the Queen. Renard denied her,
Ev'n now to me.
Howard. Their Flemish go-between
And all-in-all. I came to thank her Majesty
For freeing my friend Bagenhall from the Tower;
A grace to me! Mercy, that herb-of-grace,
Flowers now but seldom.
Petre. Only now perhaps.
Because the Queen hath been three days in tears
For Philip's going—like the wild hedge-rose
Of a soft winter, possible, not probable,
However you have prov'n it.
Howard. I must see her.

Enter RENARD.

Renard. My Lords, you cannot see her Majesty.
Howard. Why then the King! for I would have him bring it
Home to the leisure wisdom of his Queen,
Before he go, that since these statutes past,
Gardiner out-Gardiners Gardiner in his heat,
Bonner cannot out-Bonner his own self—
Beast!—but they play with fire as children do,
And burn the house. I know that these are breeding
A fierce resolve and fixt heart-hate in men
Against the King, the Queen, the Holy Father,
The faith itself. Can I not see him?
Renard. Not now.
And in all this, my Lord, her Majesty
Is flint of flint, you may strike fire from her,
Not hope to melt her. I will give your message.
[*Exeunt* Petre *and* Howard.

Enter PHILIP (*musing*).

Philip. She will not have Prince Philibert of Savoy,
I talk'd with her in vain—says she will live
And die true maid—a goodly creature too.
Would *she* had been the Queen! yet she must have him;
She troubles England: that she breathes in England
Is life and lungs to every rebel birth
That passes out of embryo.
Simon Renard!—
This Howard, whom they fear, what was he saying?
Renard. What your imperial father said, my liege,
To deal with heresy gentlier. Gardiner burns,
And Bonner burns; and it would seem this people
Care more for our brief life in their wet land,
Than yours in happier Spain. I told my Lord
He should not vex her Highness; she would say
These are the means God works with, that His church
May flourish.
Philip. Ay, sir, but in statesmanship
To strike too soon is oft to miss the blow.
Thou knowest I bad my chaplain, Castro, preach

Against these burnings.
Renard. And the Emperor
Approved you, and when last he wrote, declared
His comfort in your Grace that you were bland
And affable to men of all estates,
In hope to charm them from their hate of Spain.
Philip. In hope to crush all heresy under Spain.
But, Renard, I am sicker staying here
Than any sea could make me passing hence,
Tho' I be ever deadly sick at sea.
So sick am I with biding for this child.
Is it the fashion in this clime for women
To go twelve months in bearing of a child?
The nurses yawn'd, the cradle gaped, they led
Processions, chanted litanies, clash'd their bells,
Shot off their lying cannon, and her priests
Have preach'd, the fools, of this fair prince to come;
Till, by St. James, I find myself the fool.
Why do you lift your eyebrow at me thus?
Renard. I never saw your Highness moved till now.
Philip. So weary am I of this wet land of theirs,
And every soul of man that breathes therein.
Renard. My liege, we must not drop the mask before
The masquerade is over—
Philip. —Have I dropt it?
I have but shown a loathing face to you,
Who knew it from the first.

Enter MARY.

Mary (*aside*). With Renard. Still
Parleying with Renard, all the day with Renard,
And scarce a greeting all the day for me—
And goes to-morrow. [*Exit* Mary.
Philip (*to* Renard, *who advances to him*). Well, sir, is there more?
Renard (*who has perceived the* Queen). May Simon Renard speak a single word?
Philip. Ay.
Renard. And be forgiven for it?
Philip. Simon Renard
Knows me too well to speak a single word
That could not be forgiven.
Renard. Well, my liege,
Your Grace hath a most chaste and loving wife.
Philip. Why not? The Queen of Philip should be chaste.
Renard. Ay, but, my Lord, you know what Virgil sings,
Woman is various and most mutable.
Philip. She play the harlot! never.
Renard. No, sire, no,
Not dream'd of by the rabidest gospeller.
There was a paper thrown into the palace,
'The King hath wearied of his barren bride.'
She came upon it, read it, and then rent it,
With all the rage of one who hates a truth
He cannot but allow. Sire, I would have you—
What should I say, I cannot pick my words—
Be somewhat less—majestic to your Queen.
Philip. Am I to change my manners, Simon Renard,
Because these islanders are brutal beasts?
Or would you have me turn a sonneteer,
And warble those brief-sighted eyes of hers?
Renard. Brief-sighted tho' they be, I have seen them, sire,
When you perchance were trifling royally
With some fair dame of court, suddenly fill

With such fierce fire—had it been fire indeed
It would have burnt both speakers.
Philip. Ay, and then?
Renard. Sire, might it not be policy in some matter
Of small importance now and then to cede
A point to her demand?
Philip. Well, I am going.
Renard. For should her love when you are gone, my liege,
Witness these papers, there will not be wanting
Those that will urge her injury—should her love—
And I have known such women more than one—
Veer to the counterpoint, and jealousy
Hath in it an alchemic force to fuse
Almost into one metal love and hate,—
And she impress her wrongs upon her Council,
And these again upon her Parliament—
We are not loved here, and would be then perhaps
Not so well holpen in our wars with France,
As else we might be—here she comes.

Enter MARY.

Mary. O Philip!
Nay, must you go indeed?
Philip. Madam, I must.
Mary. The parting of a husband and a wife
Is like the cleaving of a heart; one half
Will flutter here, one there.
Philip. You say true, Madam.
Mary. The Holy Virgin will not have me yet
Lose the sweet hope that I may bear a prince,
If such a prince were born and you not here!
Philip. I should be here if such a prince were born.
Mary. But must you go?
Philip. Madam, you know my father,
Retiring into cloistral solitude
To yield the remnant of his years to heaven,
Will shift the yoke and weight of all the world
From off his neck to mine. We meet at Brussels.
But since mine absence will not be for long,
Your Majesty shall go to Dover with me,
And wait my coming back.
Mary. To Dover? no,
I am too feeble. I will go to Greenwich,
So you will have me with you; and there watch
All that is gracious in the breath of heaven
Draw with your sails from our poor land, and pass
And leave me, Philip, with my prayers for you.
Philip. And doubtless I shall profit by your prayers.
Mary. Methinks that would you tarry one day more
(The news was sudden) I could mould myself
To bear your going better; will you do it?
Philip. Madam, a day may sink or save a realm.
Mary. A day may save a heart from breaking too.
Philip. Well, Simon Renard, shall we stop a day?
Renard. Your Grace's business will not suffer, sire,
For one day more, so far as I can tell.
Philip. Then one day more to please her Majesty.
Mary. The sunshine sweeps across my life again.
O if I knew you felt this parting, Philip,
As I do.
Philip. By St. James I do protest,
Upon the faith and honor of a Spaniard,

I am vastly grieved to leave your Majesty.
Simon, is supper ready?
Renard. Ay, my liege,
I saw the covers laying.
Philip. Let us have it. [*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—A Room in the Palace.

Mary, Cardinal Pole.

Mary. What have you there?
Pole. So please your Majesty,
A long petition from the foreign exiles
To spare the life of Cranmer. Bishop Thirlby,
And my Lord Paget and Lord William Howard,
Crave, in the same cause, hearing of your Grace.
Hath he not written himself—infatuated—
To sue you for his life?
Mary. His life? Oh, no;
Not sued for that—he knows it were in vain.
But so much of the anti-papal leaven
Works in him yet, he hath pray'd me not to sully
Mine own prerogative, and degrade the realm
By seeking justice at a stranger's hand
Against my natural subject. King and Queen,
To whom he owes his loyalty after God,
Shall these accuse him to a foreign prince?
Death would not grieve him more. I cannot be
True to this realm of England and the Pope
Together, says the heretic.
Pole. And there errs;
As he hath ever err'd thro' vanity.
A secular kingdom is but as the body
Lacking a soul; and in itself a beast.
The Holy Father in a Secular kingdom
Is as the soul descending out of heaven
Into a body generate.
Mary. Write to him, then.
Pole. I will.
Mary. And sharply, Pole.
Pole. Here come the Cranmerites!

Enter Thirlby, Lord Paget, Lord William Howard

Howard. Health to your Grace! Good morrow, my Lord Cardinal;
We make our humble prayer unto your Grace
That Cranmer may withdraw to foreign parts,
Or into private life within the realm.
In several bills and declarations, Madam,
He hath recanted all his heresies.
Paget. Ay, ay; if Bonner have not forged the bills. [*Aside.*
Mary. Did not More die, and Fisher? he must burn.
Howard. He hath recanted, Madam.
Mary. The better for him.
He burns in Purgatory, not in Hell.
Howard. Ay, ay, your Grace; but it was never seen
That any one recanting thus at full,
As Cranmer hath, came to the fire on earth.
Mary. It will be seen now, then.
Thirlby. O Madam, Madam!
I thus implore you, low upon my knees,
To reach the hand of mercy to my friend.
I have err'd with him; with him I have recanted.
What human reason is there why my friend
Should meet with lesser mercy than myself?
Mary. My Lord of Ely, this. After a riot
We hang the leaders, let their following go.

Cranmer is head and father of these heresies,
New learning as they call it; yea, may God
Forget me at most need when I forget
Her foul divorce—my sainted mother—No!—
Howard. Ay, ay, but mighty doctors doubted there.
The Pope himself waver'd; and more than one
Row'd in that galley—Gardiner to wit,
Whom truly I deny not to have been
Your faithful friend and trusty councillor.
Hath not your Highness ever read his book,
His tractate upon True Obedience,
Writ by himself and Bonner?
Mary. I will take
Such order with all bad, heretical books
That none shall hold them in his house and live,
Henceforward. No, my Lord.
Howard. Then never read it.
The truth is here. Your father was a man
Of such colossal kinghood, yet so courteous,
Except when wroth, you scarce could meet his eye
And hold your own; and were he wroth indeed,
You held it less, or not at all. I say,
Your father had a will that beat men down;
Your father had a brain that beat men down—
Pole. Not me, my Lord.
Howard. No, for you were not here;
You sit upon this fallen Cranmer's throne;
And it would more become you, my Lord Legate,
To join a voice, so potent with her Highness,
To ours in plea for Cranmer than to stand
On naked self-assertion.

Mary. All your voices
Are waves on flint. The heretic must burn.
Howard. Yet once he saved your Majesty's own life;
Stood out against the King in your behalf,
At his own peril.
Mary. I know not if he did;
And if he did I care not, my Lord Howard.
My life is not so happy, no such boon,
That I should spare to take a heretic priest's,
Who saved it or not saved. Why do you vex me?
Paget. Yet to save Cranmer were to serve the Church,
Your Majesty's I mean; he is effaced,
Self-blotted out; so wounded in his honor,
He can but creep down into some dark hole
Like a hurt beast, and hide himself and die;
But if you burn him,—well, your Highness knows
The saying, 'Martyr's blood—seed of the Church.'
Mary. Of the true Church; but his is none, nor will be.
You are too politic for me, my Lord Paget.
And if he have to live so loath'd a life,
It were more merciful to burn him now.
Thirlby. O yet relent. O, Madam, if you knew him
As I do, ever gentle, and so gracious,
With all his learning—
Mary. Yet a heretic still.
His learning makes his burning the more just.
Thirlby. So worshipt of all those that came across him;
The stranger at his hearth, and all his house—
Mary. His children and his concubine, belike.
Thirlby. To do him any wrong was to beget
A kindness from him, for his heart was rich,

Of such fine mould, that if you sow'd therein
The seed of Hate, it blossom'd Charity.
Pole. 'After his kind it costs him nothing,' there's
An old world English adage to the point.
These are but natural graces, my good Bishop,
Which in the Catholic garden are as flowers,
But on the heretic dunghill only weeds.
Howard. Such weeds make dunghills gracious.
Mary. Enough, my Lords.
It is God's will, the Holy Father's will,
And Philip's will, and mine, that he should burn.
He is pronounced anathema.
Howard. Farewell, Madam,
God grant you ampler mercy at your call
Than you have shown to Cranmer.
[*Exeunt* Lords.
Pole. After this,
Your Grace will hardly care to overlook
This same petition of the foreign exiles
For Cranmer's life.
Mary. Make out the writ to-night.
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—Oxford. Cranmer in Prison.

Cranmer. Last night, I dream'd the faggots were alight,
And that myself was fasten'd to the stake,
And found it all a visionary flame,
Cool as the light in old decaying wood;
And then King Harry look'd from out a cloud,
And bad me have good courage; and I heard
An angel cry 'There is more joy in Heaven,'—
And after that, the trumpet of the dead. [*Trumpets without.*
Why, there are trumpets blowing now: what is it?

Enter Father Cole.

Cole. Cranmer, I come to question you again;
Have you remain'd in the true Catholic faith
I left you in?
Cranmer. In the true Catholic faith,
By Heaven's grace, I am more and more confirm'd.
Why are the trumpets blowing, Father Cole?
Cole. Cranmer, it is decided by the Council
That you to-day should read your recantation
Before the people in St. Mary's Church.
And there be many heretics in the town,
Who loathe you for your late return to Rome,
And might assail you passing through the street,
And tear you piecemeal: so you have a guard.
Cranmer. Or seek to rescue me. I thank the Council.
Cole. Do you lack any money?
Cranmer. Nay, why should I?
The prison fare is good enough for me.
Cole. Ay, but to give the poor.
Cranmer. Hand it me, then!
I thank you.
Cole. For a little space, farewell;
Until I see you in St. Mary's Church.
[*Exit* Cole.
Cranmer. It is against all precedent to burn
One who recants; they mean to pardon me.
To give the poor—they give the poor who die.
Well, burn me or not burn me I am fixt;
It is but a communion, not a mass:
A holy supper, not a sacrifice;
No man can make his Maker—Villa Garcia.

Enter VILLA GARCIA.

Villa Garcia. Pray you write out this paper for me, Cranmer.
Cranmer. Have I not writ enough to satisfy you?
Villa Garcia. It is the last.
Cranmer. Give it me, then. [*He writes.*
Villa Garcia. Now sign.
Cranmer. I have sign'd enough, and I will sign no more.
Villa Garcia. It is no more than what you have sign'd already,
The public form thereof.
Cranmer. It may be so;
I sign it with my presence, if I read it.
Villa Garcia. But this is idle of you. Well, sir, well,
You are to beg the people to pray for you;
Exhort them to a pure and virtuous life;
Declare the Queen's right to the throne; confess
Your faith before all hearers; and retract
That Eucharistic doctrine in your book.
Will you not sign it now?
Cranmer. No, Villa Garcia,
I sign no more. Will they have mercy on me?
Villa Garcia. Have you good hopes of mercy! So, farewell. [*Exit.*
Cranmer. Good hopes, not theirs, have I that I am fixt,
Fixt beyond fall; however, in strange hours,
After the long brain-dazing colloquies,
And thousand-times recurring argument
Of those two friars ever in my prison,
When left alone in my despondency,
Without a friend, a book, my faith would seem
Dead or half-drown'd, or else swam heavily
Against the huge corruptions of the Church,
Monsters of mistradition, old enough
To scare me into dreaming, 'what am I, Cranmer, against whole ages?' was it so,
Or am I slandering my most inward friend,
To veil the fault of my most outward foe—
The soft and tremulous coward in the flesh?
O higher, holier, earlier, purer church,
I have found thee and not leave thee any more.
It is but a communion, not a mass—
No sacrifice, but a life-giving feast!
(*Writes.*) So, so; this will I say—thus will I pray. [*Puts up the paper.*

Enter BONNER.

Bonner. Good day, old friend; what, you look somewhat worn;
And yet it is a day to test your health
Ev'n at the best: I scarce have spoken with you
Since when?—your degradation. At your trial
Never stood up a bolder man than you;
You would not cap the Pope's commissioner—
Your learning, and your stoutness, and your heresy,
Dumbfounded half of us. So, after that,
We had to dis-archbishop and unlord,
And make you simple Cranmer once again.
The common barber clipt your hair, and I
Scraped from your finger-points the holy oil;
And worse than all, you had to kneel to *me*;
Which was not pleasant for you, Master Cranmer.
Now you, that would not recognize the Pope,
And you, that would not own the Real Presence,
Have found a real presence in the stake,

Which frights you back into the ancient faith;
And so you have recanted to the Pope.
How are the mighty fallen, Master Cranmer!
Cranmer. You have been more fierce against the Pope than I;
But why fling back the stone he strikes me with? [*Aside.*
O Bonner, if I ever did you kindness—
Power hath been given you to try faith by fire—
Pray you, remembering how yourself have changed,
Be somewhat pitiful, after I have gone,
To the poor flock—to women and to children—
That when I was archbishop held with me.
Bonner. Ay—gentle as they call you—live or die!
Pitiful to this pitiful heresy?
I must obey the Queen and Council, man.
Win thro' this day with honor to yourself,
And I'll say something for you—so—good-bye. [*Exit.*
Cranmer. This hard coarse man of old hath crouch'd to me
Till I myself was half ashamed for him.

Enter THIRLBY.

Weep not, good Thirlby.
Thirlby. Oh, my Lord, my Lord!
My heart is no such block as Bonner's is:
Who would not weep?
Cranmer. Why do you so my-lord me,
Who am disgraced?
Thirlby. On earth; but saved in heaven
By your recanting.
Cranmer. Will they burn me, Thirlby?
Thirlby. Alas, they will; these burnings will not help
The purpose of the faith; but my poor voice
Against them is a whisper to the roar
Of a spring-tide.
Cranmer. And they will surely burn me?
Thirlby. Ay; and besides, will have you in the church
Repeat your recantation in the ears
Of all men, to the saving of their souls,
Before your execution. May God help you
Thro' that hard hour!
Cranmer. And may God bless you, Thirlby!
Well, they shall hear my recantation there. [*Exit* Thirlby.
Disgraced, dishonor'd!—not by them, indeed,
By mine own self—by mine own hand!
O thin-skinn'd hand and jutting veins, 'twas you
That sign'd the burning of poor Joan of Kent;
But then she was a witch. You have written much,
But you were never raised to plead for Frith,
Whose dogmas I have reach'd: he was deliver'd
To the secular arm to burn; and there was Lambert;
Who can foresee himself? truly these burnings,
As Thirlby says, are profitless to the burners,
And help the other side. You shall burn too,
Burn first when I am burnt.
Fire—inch by inch to die in agony! Latimer
Had a brief end—not Ridley. Hooper burn'd
Three-quarters of an hour. Will my faggots
Be wet as his were? It is a day of rain.
I will not muse upon it.
My fancy takes the burner's part, and makes
The fire seem even crueller than it is.

No, I not doubt that God will give me strength,
Albeit I have denied him.

Enter SOTO *and* VILLA GARCIA.

Villa Garcia. We are ready
To take you to St. Mary's, Master Cranmer.
Cranmer. And I: lead on; ye loose me from my bonds.
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III. — ST. MARY'S CHURCH.

COLE *in the Pulpit,* LORD WILLIAMS OF THAME *presiding.* LORD WILLIAM HOWARD, LORD PAGET, *and others.* CRANMER *enters between* SOTO *and* VILLA GARCIA, *and the whole Choir strike up* 'Nunc Dimittis.' CRANMER *is set upon a Scaffold before the people.*

Cole. Behold him—
[*A pause: people in the foreground.*
People. Oh, unhappy sight!
First Protestant. See how the tears run down his fatherly face.
Second Protestant. James, didst thou ever see a carrion crow
Stand watching a sick beast before he dies?
First Protestant. Him perch'd up there? I wish some thunderbolt
Would make this Cole a cinder, pulpit and all.
Cole. Behold him, brethren: he hath cause to weep!—
So have we all: weep with him if ye will,
Yet——
It is expedient for one man to die,
Yea, for the people, lest the people die.
Yet wherefore should he die that hath return'd
To the one Catholic Universal Church,
Repentant of his errors?
Protestant murmurs. Ay, tell us that.
Cole. Those of the wrong side will despise the man,
Deeming him one that thro' the fear of death
Gave up his cause, except he seal his faith
In sight of all with flaming martyrdom.
Cranmer. Ay.
Cole. Ye hear him, and albeit there may seem
According to the canons pardon due
To him that so repents, yet are there causes
Wherefore our Queen and Council at this time
Adjudge him to the death. He hath been a traitor,
A shaker and confounder of the realm;
And when the King's divorce was sued at Rome,
He here, this heretic metropolitan,
As if he had been the Holy Father, sat
And judged it. Did I call him heretic?
A huge heresiarch! never was it known
That any man so writing, preaching so,
So poisoning the Church, so long continuing,
Hath found his pardon; therefore he must die,
For warning and example.
Other reasons
There be for this man's ending, which our Queen
And Council at this present deem it not
Expedient to be known.
Protestant murmurs. I warrant you.
Cole. Take therefore, all, example by this man,
For if our Holy Queen not pardon him,
Much less shall others in like cause escape,
That all of you, the highest as the lowest,
May learn there is no power against the Lord.

There stands a man, once of so high degree,
Chief prelate of our Church, archbishop, first
In Council, second person in the realm,
Friend for so long time of a mighty King;
And now ye see downfallen and debased
From councillor to caitiff—fallen so low,
The leprous flutterings of the byway, scum
And offal of the city would not change
Estates with him; in brief, so miserable,
There is no hope of better left for him,
No place for worse.
Yet, Cranmer, be thou glad.
This is the work of God. He is glorified
In thy conversion: lo! thou art reclaim'd;
He brings thee home: nor fear but that to-day
Thou shalt receive the penitent thief's award,
And be with Christ the Lord in Paradise.
Remember how God made the fierce fire seem
To those three children like a pleasant dew.
Remember, too,
The triumph of St. Andrew on his cross,
The patience of St. Lawrence in the fire.
Thus, if thou call on God and all the saints,
God will beat down the fury of the flame,
Or give thee saintly strength to undergo.
And for thy soul shall masses here be sung
By every priest in Oxford. Pray for him.

Cranmer. Ay, one and all, dear brothers, pray for me;
Pray with one breath, one heart, one soul for me.

Cole. And now, lest anyone among you doubt
The man's conversion and remorse of heart,
Yourselves shall hear him speak. Speak, Master Cranmer,
Fulfil your promise made me, and proclaim
Your true undoubted faith, that all may hear.

Cranmer. And that I will. O God, Father of Heaven!
O Son of God, Redeemer of the world!
O Holy Ghost! proceeding from them both,
Three persons and one God, have mercy on me,
Most miserable sinner, wretched man.
I have offended against heaven and earth
More grievously than any tongue can tell.
Then whither should I flee for any help?
I am ashamed to lift my eyes to heaven,
And I can find no refuge upon earth.
Shall I despair then?—God forbid!
O God,
For thou art merciful, refusing none
That come to Thee for succor, unto Thee,
Therefore, I come; humble myself to Thee;
Saying, O Lord God, although my sins be great,
For thy great mercy have mercy! O God the Son,
Not for slight faults alone, when thou becamest
Man in the Flesh, was the great mystery wrought;
O God the Father, not for little sins
Didst thou yield up thy Son to human death;
But for the greatest sin that can be sinn'd,
Yea, even such as mine, incalculable,
Unpardonable,—sin against the light,

The truth of God, which I had proven and known.
Thy mercy must be greater than all sin.
Forgive me, Father, for no merit of mine,
But that Thy name by man be glorified,
And Thy most blessed Son's, who died for man.
Good people, every man at time of death
Would fain set forth some saying that may live
After his death and better humankind;
For death gives life's last word a power to live,
And, like the stone-cut epitaph, remain
After the vanish'd voice, and speak to men.
God grant me grace to glorify my God!
And first I say it is a grievous case,
Many so dote upon this bubble world,
Whose colors in a moment break and fly,
They care for nothing else. What saith St. John:—
'Love of this world is hatred against God.'
Again, I pray you all that, next to God,
You do unmurmuringly and willingly
Obey your King and Queen, and not for dread
Of these alone, but from the fear of Him
Whose ministers they be to govern you.
Thirdly, I pray you all to live together
Like brethren; yet what hatred Christian men
Bear to each other, seeming not as brethren,
But mortal foes! But do you good to all
As much as in you lieth. Hurt no man more
Than you would harm your loving natural brother
Of the same roof, same breast. If any do,
Albeit he think himself at home with God,
Of this be sure, he is whole worlds away.
Protestant murmurs. What sort of brothers then be those that lust
To burn each other?
Williams. Peace among you, there!
Cranmer. Fourthly, to those that own exceeding wealth,
Remember that sore saying spoken once
By Him that was the truth, 'How hard it is
For the rich man to enter into Heaven;'
Let all rich men remember that hard word.
I have not time for more: if ever, now
Let them flow forth in charity, seeing now
The poor so many, and all food so dear.
Long have I lain in prison, yet have heard
Of all their wretchedness. Give to the poor,
Ye give to God. He is with us in the poor.
And now, and forasmuch as I have come
To the last end of life, and thereupon
Hangs all my past, and all my life to be,
Either to live with Christ in Heaven with joy,
Or to be still in pain with devils in hell;
And, seeing in a moment, I shall find
[*Pointing upwards.*
Heaven or else hell ready to swallow me,
[*Pointing downwards.*
I shall declare to you my very faith
Without all color.
Cole. Hear him, my good brethren.
Cranmer. I do believe in God, Father of all;
In every article of the Catholic faith,

And every syllable taught us by our Lord,
His prophets, and apostles, in the Testaments,
Both Old and New.
Cole. Be plainer, Master Cranmer.
Cranmer. And now I come to the great cause that weighs
Upon my conscience more than anything
Or said or done in all my life by me;
For there be writings I have set abroad
Against the truth I knew within my heart,
Written for fear of death, to save my life,
If that might be; the papers by my hand
Sign'd since my degradation—by this hand
[*Holding out his right hand.*
Written and sign'd—I here renounce them all;
And, since my hand offended, having written
Against my heart, my hand shall first be burnt,
So I may come to the fire.
[*Dead silence.*
Protestant murmurs.
First Protestant. I knew it would be so.
Second Protestant. Our prayers are heard!
Third Protestant. God bless him!
Catholic murmurs. Out upon him! out upon him!
Liar! dissembler! traitor! to the fire!
Williams (*raising his voice*). You know that you recanted all you said
Touching the sacrament in that same book
You wrote against my Lord of Winchester;
Dissemble not; play the plain Christian man.
Cranmer. Alas, my Lord,
I have been a man loved plainness all my life;
I *did* dissemble, but the hour has come
For utter truth and plainness; wherefore, I say,
I hold by all I wrote within that book. Moreover,
As for the Pope I count him Antichrist,
With all his devil's doctrines; and refuse,
Reject him, and abhor him. I have said.
[*Cries on all sides*, 'Pull him down! Away with him!'
Cole. Ay, stop the heretic's mouth! Hale him away!
Williams. Harm him not, harm him not! have him to the fire!
[CRANMER *goes out between Two Friars, smiling; hands are reached to him from the crowd.* LORD WILLIAM HOWARD *and* LORD PAGET *are left alone in the church.*
Paget. The nave and aisles all empty as a fool's jest!
No, here's Lord William Howard. What, my Lord,
You have not gone to see the burning?
Howard. Fie!
To stand at ease, and stare as at a show,
And watch a good man burn. Never again.
I saw the deaths of Latimer and Ridley.
Moreover, tho' a Catholic, I would not,
For the pure honor of our common nature
Hear what I might—another recantation
Of Cranmer at the stake.
Paget. You'd not hear that.
He pass'd out smiling, and he walk'd upright;
His eye was like a soldier's, whom the general
He looks to and he leans on as his God,
Hath rated for some backwardness and bidd'n him

Charge one against a thousand, and the man
Hurls his soil'd life against the pikes and dies.
Howard. Yet that he might not after all those papers
Of recantation yield again, who knows?
Paget. Papers of recantation! Think you then
That Cranmer read all papers that he sign'd?
Or sign'd all those they tell us that he sign'd?
Nay, I trow not: and you shall see, my Lord,
That howsoever hero-like the man
Dies in the fire, this Bonner or another
Will in some lying fashion misreport
His ending to the glory of their church.
And you saw Latimer and Ridley die?
Latimer was eighty, was he not? his best
Of life was over then.
Howard. His eighty years
Look'd somewhat crooked on him in his frieze;
But after they had stript him to his shroud,
He stood upright, a lad of twenty-one,
And gather'd with his hands the starting flame,
And wash'd his hands and all his face therein,
Until the powder suddenly blew him dead.
Ridley was longer burning; but he died
As manfully and boldly, and, 'fore God,
I know them heretics, but right English ones.
If ever, as heaven grant, we clash with Spain,
Our Ridley-soldiers and our Latimer-soldiers
Will teach her something.
Paget. Your mild Legate Pole
Will tell you that the devil helpt them thro' it.

[*A murmur of the Crowd in the distance.*
Hark, how those Roman wolfdogs howl and bay him!
Howard. Might it not be the other side rejoicing
In his brave end?
Paget. They are too crush'd, too broken,
They can but weep in silence.
Howard. Ay, ay, Paget,
They have brought it in large measure on themselves.
Have I not heard them mock the blessed Host
In songs so lewd, the beast might roar his claim
To being in God's image, more than they?
Have I not seen the gamekeeper, the groom,
Gardener, and huntsman, in the parson's place,
The parson from his own spire swung out dead,
And Ignorance crying in the streets, and all men
Regarding her? I say they have drawn the fire
On their own heads: yet, Paget, I do hold
The Catholic, if he have the greater right,
Hath been the crueller.
Paget. Action and re-action,
The miserable see-saw of our child-world,
Make us despise it at odd hours, my Lord.
Heaven help that this re-action not re-act
Yet fiercelier under Queen Elizabeth,
So that she come to rule us.
Howard. The world's mad.
Paget. My Lord, the world is like a drunken man,
Who cannot move straight to his end—but reels
Now to the right, then as far to the left,
Push'd by the crowd beside—and underfoot

An earthquake; for since Henry for a doubt—
Which a young lust had clapt upon the back,
Crying, 'Forward!'—set our old church rocking, men
Have hardly known what to believe, or whether
They should believe in anything; the currents
So shift and change, they see not how they are borne,
Nor whither. I conclude the King a beast;
Verily a lion if you will—the world
A most obedient beast and fool—myself
Half beast and fool as appertaining to it
Altho' your Lordship hath as little of each
Cleaving to your original Adam-clay,
As may be consonant with mortality.

Howard. We talk and Cranmer suffers.
The kindliest man I ever knew; see, see,
I speak of him in the past. Unhappy land!
Hard-natured Queen, half-Spanish in herself,
And grafted on the hard-grain'd stock of Spain—
Her life, since Philip left her, and she lost
Her fierce desire of bearing him a child,
Hath, like a brief and bitter winter's day,
Gone narrowing down and darkening to a close.
There will be more conspiracies, I fear.

Paget. Ay, ay, beware of France.

Howard. O Paget, Paget!
I have seen heretics of the poorer sort,
Expectant of the rack from day to day,
To whom the fire were welcome, lying chain'd
In breathless dungeons over steaming sewers,
Fed with rank bread that crawl'd upon the tongue,
And putrid water, every drop a worm,
Until they died of rotted limbs; and then
Cast on the dunghill naked, and become
Hideously alive again from head to heel,
Made even the carrion-nosing mongrel vomit
With hate and horror.

Paget. Nay, you sicken *me*
To hear you.

Howard. Fancy-sick; these things are done,
Done right against the promise of this Queen
Twice given.

Paget. No faith with heretics, my Lord!
Hist! there be two old gossips—gospellers,
I take it; stand behind the pillar here;
I warrant you they talk about the burning.

Enter TWO OLD WOMEN. JOAN, *and after her* TIB.

Joan. Why, it be Tib!

Tib. I cum behind tha, gall, and couldn't make tha hear. Eh, the wind and the wet! What a day, what a day! nigh upo' judgement daay loike. Pwoaps be pretty things, Joan, but they wunt set i' the Lord's cheer o' that daay.

Joan. I must set down myself, Tib; it be a var waay vor my owld legs up vro' Islip. Eh, my rheumatizy be that bad howiver be I to win to the burnin'.

Tib. I should saay 'twur ower by now. I'd ha' been here avore, but Dumble wur blow'd wi' the wind, and Dumble's the best milcher in Islip.

Joan. Our Daisy's as good 'z her

Tib. Noa, Joan.

Joan. Our Daisy's butter's as good 'z hern.

Tib. Noa, Joan.

Joan. Our Daisy's cheeses be better.

Tib. Noa, Joan.

Joan. Eh, then ha' thy waay wi' me, Tib; ez thou hast wi' thy owld man.

Tib. Ay, Joan, and my owld man wur up and awaay betimes wi' dree hard eggs for a good pleace at the burnin'; and barrin' the wet, Hodge 'ud ha' been a-harrowin' o' white peasen i' the outfield—and barrin' the wind, Dumble wur blow'd wi' the wind, so 'z we was forced to stick her, but we fetched her round at last. Thank the Lord therevore. Dumble's the best milcher in Islip.

Joan. Thou's thy way wi' man and beast, Tib. I wonder at tha', it beats me! Eh, but I do know ez Pwoaps and vires be bad things; tell 'ee now, I heerd summat as summun towld summun o' owld Bishop Gardiner's end; there wur an owld lord a-cum to dine wi' un, and a wur so owld a couldn't bide vor his dinner, but a had to bide howsomiver, vor 'I wunt dine,' says my Lord Bishop, says he, 'not till I hears ez Latimer and Ridley be a-vire;' and so they bided on and on till vour o' the clock, till his man cum in post vro' here and tells un ez the vire has tuk holt. 'Now,' says the Bishop, says he, 'we'll gwo to dinner;' and the owld lord fell to 's meat wi' a will, God bless un! but Gardiner wur struck down like by the hand o' God avore a could taste a mossel, and a set un all a-vire, so 'z the tongue on un cum a-lolluping out o' 'is mouth as black as a rat. Thank the Lord, therevore.

Paget. The fools!

Tib. Ay, Joan; and Queen Mary gwoes on a-burnin' and a-burnin', to get her baaby born; but all her burnin's 'ill never burn out the hypocrisy that makes the water in her. There's nought but the vire of God's hell ez can burn out that.

Joan. Thank the Lord, therevore.

Paget. The fools!

Tib. A-burnin', and a-burnin', and a-makin' 'o volk madder and madder; but tek thou my word vor't, Joan,—and I bean't wrong not twice 'i ten year—the burnin' o' the owld archbishop 'll burn the Pwoap out o' this 'ere land vor iver and iver.

Howard. Out of the church, you brace of cursed crones,
Or I will have you duck'd! (*Women hurry out.*) Said I not right?
For how should reverend prelate or throned prince
Brook for an hour such brute malignity?
Ah, what an acrid wine has Luther brew'd!

Paget. Pooh, pooh, my Lord! poor garrulous country-wives.
Buy you their cheeses, and they'll side with you;
You cannot judge the liquor from the lees.

Howard. I think that in some sort we may. But see,

Enter PETERS.

Peters, my gentleman, an honest Catholic,
Who follow'd with the crowd to Cranmer's fire.
One that would neither misreport nor lie,
Not to gain paradise: no, nor if the Pope,
Charged him to do it—he is white as death.
Peters, how pale you look! you bring the smoke
Of Cranmer's burning with you.

Peters. Twice or thrice
The smoke of Cranmer's burning wrapt me round.

Howard. Peters, you know me Catholic, but English.
Did he die bravely? Tell me that, or leave
All else untold.

Peters. My Lord, he died most bravely.

Howard. Then tell me all.

Paget. Ay, Master Peters, tell us.

Peters. You saw him how he past among the crowd;
And ever as he walk'd the Spanish friars
Still plied him with entreaty and reproach:
But Cranmer, as the helmsman at the helm
Steers, ever looking to the happy haven
Where he shall rest at night, moved to his death;
And I could see that many silent hands
Came from the crowd and met his own; and thus,
When we had come where Ridley burnt with Latimer,
He, with a cheerful smile, as one whose mind
Is all made up, in haste put off the rags
They had mock'd his misery with, and all in white,
His long white beard, which he had never shaven
Since Henry's death, down-sweeping to the chain,
Wherewith they bound him to the stake, he stood
More like an ancient father of the Church,
Than heretic of these times; and still the friars
Plied him, but Cranmer only shook his head,
Or answer'd them in smiling negatives;
Whereat Lord Williams gave a sudden cry:—
'Make short! make short!' and so they lit the wood.
Then Cranmer lifted his left hand to heaven,
And thrust his right into the bitter flame;
And crying, in his deep voice, more than once,
'This hath offended—this unworthy hand!'
So held it till it all was burn'd, before
The flame had reach'd his body; I stood near—
Mark'd him—he never uttered moan of pain:
He never stirr'd or writhed, but, like a statue,
Unmoving in the greatness of the flame,
Gave up the ghost; and so past martyr-like—
Martyr I may not call him—past—but whither?

Paget. To purgatory, man, to purgatory.

Peters. Nay, but, my Lord, he denied purgatory.

Paget. Why then to Heaven, and God ha' mercy on him.

Howard. Paget, despite his fearful heresies,
I loved the man, and needs must moan for him;
O Cranmer!

Paget. But your moan is useless now:
Come out, my Lord, it is a world of fools. [*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—London. Hall in the Palace.

Queen, Sir Nicholas Heath.

Heath. Madam,
I do assure you, that it must be look'd to:
Calais is but ill-garrison'd, in Guisnes
Are scarce two hundred men, and the French fleet
Rule in the narrow seas. It must be look'd to,
If war should fall between yourself and France;
Or you will lose your Calais.

Mary. It shall be look'd to;
I wish you a good morning, good Sir Nicholas:
Here is the King. [*Exit* Heath.

Enter Philip.

Philip. Sir Nicholas tells you true,

And you must look to Calais when I go.
Mary. Go? must you go, indeed —again—so soon?
Why, nature's licensed vagabond, the swallow,
That might live always in the sun's warm heart,
Stays longer here in our poor north than you:—
Knows where he nested—ever comes again.
Philip. And, Madam, so shall I.
Mary. O, will you? will you?
I am faint with fear that you will come no more.
Philip. Ay, ay; but many voices call me hence.
Mary. Voices—I hear unhappy rumors—nay,
I say not, I believe. What voices call you
Dearer than mine that should be dearest to you?
Alas, my Lord! what voices and how many?
Philip. The voices of Castille and Aragon,
Granada, Naples, Sicily, and Milan,—
The voices of Franche-Comté, and the Netherlands,
The voices of Peru and Mexico,
Tunis, and Oran, and the Philippines,
And all the fair spice-islands of the East.
Mary (*admiringly*). You are the mightiest monarch upon earth,
I but a little Queen: and, so indeed,
Need you the more.
Philip. A little Queen! but when
I came to wed your majesty, Lord Howard,
Sending an insolent shot that dash'd the seas
Upon us, made us lower our kingly flag
To yours of England.
Mary. Howard is all English!
There is no king, not were he ten times king,
Ten times our husband, but must lower his flag
To that of England in the seas of England.
Philip. Is that your answer?
Mary. Being Queen of England, I have none other.
Philip. So.
Mary. But wherefore not
Helm the huge vessel of your state, my liege,
Here by the side of her who loves you most?
Philip. No, Madam, no! a candle in the sun
Is all but smoke—a star beside the moon
Is all but lost; your people will not crown me—
Your people are as cheerless as your clime;
Hate me and mine: witness the brawls, the gibbets.
Here swings a Spaniard—there an Englishman;
The peoples are unlike as their complexion;
Yet will I be your swallow and return—
But now I cannot bide.
Mary. Not to help *me?*
They hate *me* also for my love to you,
My Philip; and these judgments on the land—
Harvestless autumns, horrible agues, plague—
Philip. The blood and sweat of heretics at the stake
Is God's best dew upon the barren field.
Burn more!
Mary. I will, I will; and you will stay?
Philip. Have I not said? Madam, I came to sue
Your Council and yourself to declare war.
Mary. Sir, there are many English in your ranks
To help your battle.
Philip. So far, good. I say
I came to sue your Council and yourself
To declare war against the King of France.

"THE GIRL AND BOY, SIR, KNOW THEIR DIFFERENCES!"—*Page 130.*

Mary. Not to see me?
Philip. Ay, Madam, to see you.
Unalterably and pesteringly fond!
[*Aside.*
But, soon or late you must have war with France;
King Henry warms your traitors at his hearth.
Carew is there, and Thomas Stafford there.
Courtenay, belike—
Mary. A fool and featherhead!
Philip. Ay, but they use his name. In brief, this Henry
Stirs up your land against you to the intent
That you may lose your English heritage.
And then, your Scottish namesake marrying
The Dauphin, he would weld France, England, Scotland,
Into one sword to hack at Spain and me.
Mary. And yet the Pope is now colleagued with France;
You make your wars upon him down in Italy:—
Philip, can that be well?
Philip. Content you, Madam;
You must abide my judgment, and my father's,
Who deems it a most just and holy war.
The Pope would cast the Spaniard out of Naples:
He calls us worse than Jews, Moors, Saracens.
The Pope has pushed his horns beyond his mitre—
Beyond his province. Now,
Duke Alva will but touch him on the horns,
And he withdraws; and of his holy head—
For Alva is true son of the true church—
No hair is harm'd. Will you not help me here?
Mary. Alas! the Council will not hear of war.
They say your wars are not the wars of England.
They will not lay more taxes on a land
So hunger-nipt and wretched; and you know
The crown is poor. We have given the church-lands back:
The nobles would not; nay, they clapt their hands
Upon their swords when ask'd; and therefore God
Is hard upon the people. What's to be done?
Sir, I will move them in your cause again,
And we will raise us loans and subsidies
Among the merchants; and Sir Thomas Gresham
Will aid us. There is Antwerp and the Jews.
Philip. Madam, my thanks.
Mary. And you will stay your going?
Philip. And further to discourage and lay lame
The plots of France, altho' you love her not,
You must proclaim Elizabeth your heir.
She stands between you and the Queen of Scots.
Mary. The Queen of Scots at least is Catholic.
Philip. Ay, Madam, Catholic; but I will not have
The King of France the King of England too.
Mary. But she's a heretic, and, when I am gone,
Brings the new learning back.
Philip. It must be done.
You must proclaim Elizabeth your heir.
Mary. Then it is done; but you will stay your going
Somewhat beyond your settled purpose?
Philip. No!
Mary. What, not one day?
Philip. You beat upon the rock.
Mary. And I am broken there.
Philip. Is this a place
To wail in, Madam? what! a public hall.

Go in, I pray you.
Mary. Do not seem so changed.
Say go; but only say it lovingly.
Philip. You do mistake. I am not one to change.
I never loved you more.
Mary. Sire, I obey you.
Come quickly.
Philip. Ay. [*Exit* Mary.

Enter COUNT DE FERIA.

Feria (*aside*). The Queen in tears!
Philip. Feria!
Hast thou not mark'd—come closer to mine ear—
How doubly aged this Queen of ours hath grown
Since she lost hope of bearing us a child?
Feria. Sire, if your Grace hath mark'd it, so have I.
Philip. Hast thou not likewise mark'd Elizabeth,
How fair and royal—like a Queen, indeed?
Feria. Allow me the same answer as before—
That if your Grace hath mark'd her, so have I.
Philip. Good, now; methinks my Queen is like enough
To leave me by and by.
Feria. To leave you, sire?
Philip. I mean not like to live. Elizabeth—
To Philibert of Savoy, as you know,
We meant to wed her; but I am not sure
She will not serve me better—so my Queen
Would leave me—as—my wife.
Feria. Sire, even so.
Philip. She will not have Prince Philibert of Savoy.
Feria. No, sire.
Philip. I have to pray you, some odd time,
To sound the Princess carelessly on this;
Not as from me, but as your phantasy;
And tell me how she takes it.
Feria. Sire, I will.
Philip. I am not certain but that Philibert
Shall be the man; and I shall urge his suit
Upon the Queen, because I am not certain:
You understand, Feria.
Feria. Sire, I do.
Philip. And if you be not secret in this matter,
You understand me there, too?
Feria. Sire, I do.
Philip. You must be sweet and supple, like a Frenchman.
She is none of those who loathe the honeycomb. [*Exit* Feria.

Enter RENARD.

Renard. My liege, I bring you goodly tidings.
Philip. Well?
Renard. There *will* be war with France, at last, my liege;
Sir Thomas Stafford, a bull-headed ass,
Sailing from France, with thirty Englishmen,
Hath taken Scarboro' Castle, north of York;
Proclaims himself protector, and affirms
The Queen has forfeited her right to reign
By marriage with an alien—other things
As idle; a weak Wyatt! Little doubt
This buzz will soon be silenced; but the Council
(I have talk'd with some already) are for war.
This is the fifth conspiracy hatch'd in France;
They show their teeth upon it; and your Grace,
So you will take advice of mine, should stay
Yet for awhile, to shape and guide the event.
Philip. Good! Renard, I will stay then.

Renard. Also, sire,
Might I not say—to please your wife, the Queen?
Philip. Ay, Renard, if you care to put it so. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—A Room in the Palace.

MARY, *sitting: a rose in her hand.* LADY CLARENCE. ALICE, *in the background.*

Mary. Look! I have play'd with this poor rose so long
I have broken off the head.
Lady Clarence. Your Grace hath been
More merciful to many a rebel head
That should have fallen, and may rise again.
Mary. There were not many hang'd for Wyatt's rising.
Lady Clarence. Nay, not two hundred.
Mary. I could weep for them
And her, and mine own self and all the world.
Lady Clarence. For her? for whom, your Grace?

Enter USHER.

Usher. The Cardinal.

Enter CARDINAL POLE. (MARY *rises.*)

Mary. Reginald Pole, what news hath plagued thy heart?
What makes thy favor like the bloodless head
Fall'n on the block, and held up by the hair?
Philip?—
Pole. No, Philip is as warm in life
As ever.
Mary. Ay, and then as cold as ever. Is Calais taken?
Pole. Cousin, there hath chanced
A sharper harm to England and to Rome,
Than Calais taken. Julius the Third
Was ever just, and mild, and father-like;
But this new Pope Caraffa, Paul the Fourth,
Not only reft me of that legateship
Which Julius gave me, and the legateship
Annex'd to Canterbury—nay, but worse—
And yet I must obey the Holy Father,
And so must you, good cousin;—worse than all,
A passing bell toll'd in a dying ear—
He hath cited me to Rome, for heresy,
Before his Inquisition.
Mary. I knew it, cousin,
But held from you all papers sent by Rome,
That you might rest among us, till the Pope,
To compass which I wrote myself to Rome,
Reversed his doom, and that you might not seem
To disobey his Holiness.
Pole. He hates Philip;
He is all Italian, and he hates the Spaniard;
He cannot dream that *I* advised the war;
He strikes thro' me at Philip and yourself.
Nay, but I know it of old, he hates me too;
So brands me in the stare of Christendom
A heretic!
Now, even now, when bow'd before my time,
The house half-ruin'd ere the lease be out;
When I should guide the Church in peace at home,
After my twenty years of banishment,
And all my lifelong labor to uphold
The primacy—a heretic. Long ago,
When I was ruler in the patrimony,
I was too lenient to the Lutheran,
And I and learned friends among ourselves
Would freely canvass certain Lutheranisms.

What then, he knew I was no Lutheran.
A heretic!
He drew this shaft against me to the head,
When it was thought I might be chosen Pope,
But then withdrew it. In full consistory,
When I was made Archbishop, he approved me.
And how should he have sent me Legate hither,
Deeming me heretic? and what heresy since?
But he was evermore mine enemy,
And hates the Spaniard—fiery-choleric,
A drinker of black, strong, volcanic wines,
That ever make him fierier. I, a heretic?
Your Highness knows that in pursuing heresy
I have gone beyond your late Lord Chancellor,—
He cried Enough! enough! before his death.—
Gone beyond him and mine own natural man
(It was God's cause); so far they call me now,
The scourge and butcher of their English church.

Mary. Have courage, your reward is Heaven itself.

Pole. They groan amen; they swarm into the fire
Like flies—for what? no dogma. They know nothing;
They burn for nothing.

Mary. You have done your best.

Pole. Have done my best, and as a faithful son,
That all day long hath wrought his father's work,
When back he comes at evening hath the door
Shut on him by the father whom he loved,
His early follies cast into his teeth,
And the poor son turn'd out into the street
To sleep, to die—I shall die of it, cousin.

Mary. I pray you be not so disconsolate;
I still will do mine utmost with the Pope.
Poor cousin!
Have not I been the fast friend of your life
Since mine began, and it was thought we two
Might make one flesh, and cleave unto each other
As man and wife?

Pole. Ah, cousin, I remember
How I would dandle you upon my knee
At lisping-age. I watch'd you dancing once
With your huge father; he look'd the Great Harry,
You but his cockboat; prettily you did it,
And innocently. No—we were not made
One flesh in happiness, no happiness here;
But now we are made one flesh in misery;
Our bridemaids are not lovely—Disappointment,
Ingratitude, Injustice, Evil-tongue,
Labor-in-vain.

Mary. Surely, not all in vain.
Peace, cousin, peace! I am sad at heart myself.

Pole. Our altar is a mound of dead men's clay,
Dug from the grave that yawns for us beyond;
And there is one Death stands behind the Groom,
And there is one Death stands behind the Bride—

Mary. Have you been looking at the 'Dance of Death'?

Pole. No; but these libellous papers which I found
Strewn in your palace. Look you here—the Pope
Pointing at me with 'Pole, the heretic,
Thou hast burnt others, do thou burn thyself,

Or I will burn thee;' and this other; see!—
'We pray continually for the death
Of our accursed Queen and Cardinal Pole.'
This last—I dare not read it her.
[*Aside.*
Mary. Away!
Why do you bring me these?
I thought you knew me better. I never read,
I tear them; they come back upon my dreams.
The hands that write them should be burnt clean off
As Cranmer's, and the fiends that utter them
Tongue-torn with pincers, lash'd to death, or lie
Famishing in black cells, while famish'd rats
Eat them alive. Why do they bring me these?
Do you mean to drive me mad?
Pole. I had forgotten
How these poor libels trouble you. Your pardon,
Sweet cousin, and farewell! 'O bubble world,
Whose colors in a moment break and fly!'
Why, who said that? I know not—true enough!
[*Puts up the papers, all but the last, which falls. Exit* Pole.
Alice. If Cranmer's spirit were a mocking one,
And heard these two, there might be sport for him.
[*Aside.*
Mary. Clarence, they hate me; even while I speak
There lurks a silent dagger, listening
In some dark closet, some long gallery, drawn,
And panting for my blood as I go by.
Lady Clarence. Nay, Madam, there be loyal papers too,
And I have often found them.
Mary. Find me one!
Lady Clarence. Ay, Madam; but Sir Nicholas Heath, the Chancellor,
Would see your Highness.
Mary. Wherefore should I see him?
Lady Clarence. Well, Madam, he may bring you news from Philip.
Mary. So, Clarence.
Lady Clarence. Let me first put up your hair;
It tumbles all abroad.
Mary. And the gray dawn
Of an old age that never will be mine
Is all the clearer seen. No, no; what matters?
Forlorn I am, and let me look forlorn.

Enter Sir Nicholas Heath.

Heath. I bring your Majesty such grievous news
I grieve to bring it. Madam, Calais is taken.
Mary. What traitor spoke? Here, let my cousin Pole
Seize him and burn him for a Lutheran.
Heath. Her Highness is unwell. I will retire.
Lady Clarence. Madam, your Chancellor, Sir Nicholas Heath.
Mary. Sir Nicholas! I am stunn'd—Nicholas Heath?
Methought some traitor smote me on the head.
What said you, my good Lord, that our brave English
Had sallied out from Calais and driven back
The Frenchmen from their trenches?
Heath. Alas! no.
That gateway to the mainland over which
Our flag hath floated for two hundred years
Is France again.
Mary. So; but it is not lost—
Not yet. Send out: let England as of old
Rise lionlike, strike hard and deep into
The prey they are rending from her—ay, and rend

The renders too. Send out, send out, and make
Musters in all the counties; gather all
From sixteen years to sixty; collect the fleet;
Let every craft that carries sail and gun
Steer toward Calais. Guisnes is not taken yet?
Heath. Guisnes is not taken yet.
Mary. There yet is hope.
Heath. Ah, Madam, but your people are so cold;
I do much fear that England will not care.
Methinks there is no manhood left among us.
Mary. Send out; I am too weak to stir abroad:
Tell my mind to the Council—to the Parliament:
Proclaim it to the winds. Thou art cold thyself
To babble of their coldness. O would I were
My father for an hour! Away now—Quick! [*Exit* Heath.
I hoped I had served God with all my might!
It seems I have not. Ah! much heresy
Shelter'd in Calais. Saints, I have rebuilt
Your shrines, set up your broken images;
Be comfortable to me. Suffer not
That my brief reign in England be defamed
Thro' all her angry chronicles hereafter
By loss of Calais. Grant me Calais. Philip,
We have made war upon the Holy Father
All for your sake: what good could come of that?
Lady Clarence. No, Madam, not against the Holy Father;
You did but help King Philip's war with France,
Your troops were never down in Italy.
Mary. I am a byword. Heretic and rebel
Point at me and make merry. Philip gone!
And Calais gone! Time that I were gone too!
Lady Clarence. Nay, if the fetid gutter had a voice
And cried I was not clean, what should I care?
Or you, for heretic cries? And I believe,
Spite of your melancholy Sir Nicholas,
Your England is as loyal as myself.
Mary (*Seeing the paper dropt by* Pole).
There! there! another paper! Said you not
Many of these were loyal? Shall I try
If this be one of such?
Lady Clarence. Let it be, let it be.
God pardon me! I have never yet found one. [*Aside.*
Mary (*reads*). 'Your people hate you as your husband hates you.'
Clarence, Clarence, what have I done? what sin
Beyond all grace, all pardon? Mother of God,
Thou knowest never woman meant so well,
And fared so ill in this disastrous world.
My people hate me and desire my death.
Lady Clarence. No, Madam, no.
Mary. My husband hates me, and desires my death.
Lady Clarence. No, Madam; these are libels.
Mary. I hate myself, and I desire my death.
Lady Clarence. Long live your Majesty! Shall Alice sing you
One of her pleasant songs? Alice, my child,
Bring us your lute (Alice *goes*). They say the gloom of Saul
Was lighten'd by young David's harp.
Mary. Too young!
And never knew a Philip.

Re-enter Alice.

Give *me* the lute.
He hates me!

(*She sings.*)

Hapless doom of woman happy in betrothing!
Beauty passes like a breath and love is lost in loathing:
Low, my lute; speak low, my lute, but say the world is nothing—
Low, lute, low!
Love will hover round the flowers when they first awaken;
Love will fly the fallen leaf, and not be overtaken;
Low, my lute! oh low, my lute! we fade and are forsaken—
Low, dear lute, low!

Take it away! not low enough for me!
Alice. Your Grace hath a low voice.
Mary. How dare you say it?
Even for that he hates me. A low voice
Lost in a wilderness where none can hear!
A voice of shipwreck on a shoreless sea!
A low voice from the dust and from the grave
(*Sitting on the ground*). There, am I low enough now?
Alice. Good Lord! how grim and ghastly looks her Grace,
With both her knees drawn upward to her chin.
There was an old-world tomb beside my father's,
And this was open'd, and the dead were found
Sitting, and in this fashion; she looks a corpse.

Enter Lady Magdalen Dacres.

Lady Magdalen. Madam, the Count de Feria waits without,
In hopes to see your Highness.
Lady Clarence (*pointing to* Mary). Wait he must—
Her trance again. She neither sees nor hears,
And may not speak for hours.
Lady Magdalen. Unhapppiest
Of Queens and wives and women!
Alice (*in the foreground with* Lady Magdalen). And all along
Of Philip.
Lady Magdalen. Not so loud! Our Clarence there
Sees ever such an aureole round the Queen,
It gilds the greatest wronger of her peace,
Who stands the nearest to her.
Alice. Ay, this Philip;
I used to love the Queen with all my heart—
God help me, but methinks I love her less
For such a dotage upon such a man.
I would I were as tall and strong as you.
Lady Magdalen. I seem half-shamed at times to be so tall.
Alice. You are the stateliest deer in all the herd—
Beyond his aim—but I am small and scandalous,
And love to hear bad tales of Philip.
Lady Magdalen. Why?
I never heard him utter worse of you
Than that you were low-statured.
Alice. Does he think
Low stature is low nature, or all women's
Low as his own?
Lady Magdalen. There you strike in the nail.
This coarseness is a want of phantasy.
It is the low man thinks the woman low;
Sin is too dull to see beyond himself.
Alice. Ah, Magdalen, sin is bold as well as dull.
How dared he?
Lady Magdalen. Stupid soldiers oft are bold.
Poor lads, they see not what the general sees,
A risk of utter ruin. I am *not*
Beyond his aim, or was not.
Alice. Who? Not you?

Tell, tell me; save my credit with myself.
Lady Magdalen. I never breathed it to a bird in the eaves,
Would not for all the stars and maiden moon
Our drooping Queen should know! In Hampton Court
My window look'd upon the corridor;
And I was robing;—this poor throat of mine,
Barer than I should wish a man to see it,—
When he we speak of drove the window back,
And, like a thief, push'd in his royal hand;
But by God's providence a good stout staff
Lay near me; and you know me strong of arm;
I do believe I lamed his Majesty's
For a day or two, tho', give the Devil his due,
I never found he bore me any spite.
Alice. I would she could have wedded that poor youth,
My Lord of Devon—light enough, God knows,
And mixt with Wyatt's rising—and the boy
Not out of him—but neither cold, coarse, cruel,
And more than all—no Spaniard.
Lady Clarence. Not so loud.
Lord Devon, girls! what are you whispering here?
Alice. Probing an old state-secret—how it chanced
That this young Earl was sent on foreign travel,
Not lost his head.
Lady Clarence. There was no proof against him.
Alice. Nay, Madam; did not Gardiner intercept
A letter which the Count de Noailles wrote
To that dead traitor Wyatt, with full proof
Of Courtenay's treason? What became of that?
Lady Clarence. Some say that Gardiner, out of love for him,
Burnt it, and some relate that it was lost
When Wyatt sack'd the Chancellor's house in Southwark.
Let dead things rest.
Alice. Ay, and with him who died
Alone in Italy.
Lady Clarence. Much changed, I hear,
Had put off levity and put graveness on.
The foreign courts report him in his manner
Noble as his young person and old shield.
It might be so—but all is over now;
He caught a chill in the lagoons of Venice,
And died in Padua.
Mary (*looking up suddenly*). Died in the true faith?
Lady Clarence. Ay, Madam, happily.
Mary. Happier he than I.
Lady Magdalen. It seems her Highness hath awaken'd. Think you
That I might dare to tell her that the Count——
Mary. I will see no man hence for evermore,
Saving my confessor and my cousin Pole.
Lady Magdalen. It is the Count de Feria, my dear lady.
Mary. What Count?
Lady Magdalen. The Count de Feria, from his Majesty
King Philip.
Mary. Philip! quick! loop up my hair!
Throw cushions on that seat, and make it throne-like.
Arrange my dress—the gorgeous Indian shawl
That Philip brought me in our happy days!—
That covers all. So—am I somewhat Queenlike,
Bride of the mightiest sovereign upon earth?

Lady Clarence. Ay, so your Grace would bide a moment yet.
Mary. No, no, he brings a letter. I may die
Before I read it. Let me see him at once.

Enter COUNT DE FERIA (*kneels*).

Feria. I trust your Grace is well. (*Aside*) How her hand burns!
Mary. I am not well, but it will better me,
Sir Count, to read the letter which you bring.
Feria. Madam, I bring no letter.
Mary. How! no letter?
Feria. His Highness is so vex'd with strange affairs—
Mary. That his own wife is no affair of his.
Feria. Nay, Madam, nay! he sends his veriest love,
And says, he will come quickly.
Mary. Doth he, indeed?
You, sir, do *you* remember what *you* said
When last you came to England?
Feria. Madam, I brought
My King's congratulations; it was hoped
Your Highness was once more in happy state
To give him an heir male.
Mary. Sir, you said more;
You said he would come quickly. I had horses
On all the road from Dover, day and night;
On all the road from Harwich, night and day;
But the child came not, and the husband came not;
And yet he will come quickly. . . Thou hast learnt
Thy lesson, and I mine. There is no need
For Philip so to shame himself again.
Return,
And tell him that I know he comes no more.
Tell him at last I know his love is dead,
And that I am in state to bring forth death—
Thou art commission'd to Elizabeth,
And not to me!
Feria. Mere compliments and wishes.
But shall I take some message from your Grace?
Mary. Tell her to come and close my dying eyes,
And wear my crown, and dance upon my grave.
Feria. Then I may say your Grace will see your sister?
Your Grace is too low-spirited. Air and sunshine.
I would we had you, Madam, in our warm Spain.
You droop in your dim London.
Mary. Have him away!
I sicken of his readiness.
Lady Clarence. My Lord Count,
Her Highness is too ill for colloquy.
Feria (*kneels, and kisses her hand*). I wish her Highness better. (*Aside*) How her hand burns!
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—A HOUSE NEAR LONDON.

ELIZABETH, STEWARD OF THE HOUSEHOLD, ATTENDANTS.

Elizabeth. There's half an angel wrong'd in your account;
Methinks I am all angel, that I bear it
Without more ruffling. Cast it o'er again.
Steward. I were whole devil if I wrong'd you, Madam.
[*Exit* Steward.
Attendant. The Count de Feria, from the King of Spain.
Elizabeth. Ah!—let him enter. Nay, you need not go:
[*To her* Ladies.
Remain within the chamber, but apart.
We'll have no private conference. Welcome to England!

Enter FERIA.

Feria. Fair island star!
Elizabeth. I shine! What else, Sir Count?
Feria. As far as France, and into Philip's heart.
My King would know if you be fairly served,
And lodged, and treated.
Elizabeth. You see the lodging, sir,
I am well-served, and am in everything
Most loyal and most grateful to the Queen.
Feria. You should be grateful to my master, too.
He spoke of this; and unto him you owe
That Mary hath acknowledged you her heir.
Elizabeth. No, not to her nor him; but to the people,
Who know my right, and love me, as I love
The people! whom God aid!
Feria. You will be Queen,
And, were I Philip—
Elizabeth. Wherefore pause you—what?
Feria. Nay, but I speak from mine own self, not him;
Your royal sister cannot last; your hand
Will be much coveted! What a delicate one!
Our Spanish ladies have none such—and there,
Were you in Spain, this fine fair gossamer gold—
Like sun-gilt breathings on a frosty dawn—
That hovers round your shoulder—
Elizabeth. Is it so fine?
Troth, some have said so.
Feria. —would be deemed a miracle.
Elizabeth. Your Philip hath gold hair and golden beard;
There must be ladies many with hair like mine.
Feria. Some few of Gothic blood have golden hair,
But none like yours.
Elizabeth. I am happy you approve it.
Feria. But as to Philip and your Grace—consider,—
If such a one as you should match with Spain,
What hinders but that Spain and England join'd,
Should make the mightiest empire earth has known.
Spain would be England on her seas, and England
Mistress of the Indies.
Elizabeth. It may chance, that England
Will be the Mistress of the Indies yet,
Without the help of Spain.
Feria. Impossible;
Except you put Spain down.
Wide of the mark ev'n for a madman's dream.
Elizabeth. Perhaps; but we have seamen. Count de Feria,
I take it that the King hath spoken to you;
But is Don Carlos such a goodly match?
Feria. Don Carlos, Madam, is but twelve years old.
Elizabeth. Ay, tell the King that I will muse upon it;
He is my good friend, and I would keep him so;
But—he would have me Catholic of Rome,
And that I scarce can be; and, sir, till now
My sister's marriage, and my father's marriages,
Make me full fain to live and die a maid.
But I am much beholden to your King.
Have you aught else to tell me?
Feria. Nothing, Madam,
Save that methought I gathered from the Queen
That she would see your Grace before she—died.
Elizabeth. God's death! and wherefore spake you not before?

We dally with our lazy moments here,
And hers are number'd. Horses there, without!
I am much beholden to the King, your master.
Why did you keep me prating? Horses, there!
[*Exit* Elizabeth, *etc.*
Feria. So from a clear sky falls the thunderbolt!
Don Carlos? Madam, if you marry Philip,
Then I and he will snaffle your 'God's death,'
And break your paces in, and make you tame;
God's death, forsooth—you do not know King Philip. [*Exit.*

SCENE IV.—LONDON. BEFORE THE PALACE.

A light burning within. Voices *of the night passing.*

First. Is not yon light in the Queen's chamber?
Second. Ay,
They say she's dying.
First. So is Cardinal Pole.
May the great angels join their wings, and make
Down for their heads to heaven!
Second. Amen. Come on.
[*Exeunt.*

TWO OTHERS.

First. There's the Queen's light. I hear she cannot live.
Second. God curse her and her Legate! Gardiner burns
Already; but to pay them full in kind,
The hottest hold in all the devil's den
Were but a sort of winter; sir, in Guernsey,
I watch'd a woman burn; and in her agony
The mother came upon her—a child was born—
And, sir, they hurl'd it back into the fire,
That, being but baptized in fire, the babe
Might be in fire forever. Ah, good neighbor,
There should be something fierier than fire
To yield them their deserts.
First. Amen to all
Your wish, and further.
A Third Voice. Deserts! Amen to what? Whose deserts? Yours? You have a gold ring on your finger, and soft raiment about your body; and is not the woman up yonder sleeping after all she has done, in peace and quietness, on a soft bed, in a closed room, with light, fire, physic, tendance; and I have seen the true men of Christ lying famine-dead by scores, and under no ceiling but the cloud that wept on them, not for them.
First. Friend, tho' so late, it is not safe to preach.
You had best go home. What are you?
Third. What am I? One who cries continually with sweat and tears to the Lord God that it would please Him out of His infinite love to break down all kingship and queenship, all priesthood and prelacy; to cancel and abolish all bonds of human allegiance, all the magistracy, all the nobles, and all the wealthy; and to send us again, according to His promise, the one King, the Christ, and all things in common, as in the day of the first church, when Christ Jesus was King.
First. If ever I heard a madman, —let's away!
Why, you long-winded—— Sir, you go beyond me.
I pride myself on being moderate.
Good night! Go home. Besides, you curse so loud,
The watch will hear you. Get you home at once. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE V.—LONDON. A ROOM IN THE PALACE.

A Gallery on one side. The moonlight streaming through a range of windows on the wall opposite. MARY, LADY CLARENCE, LADY MAGDALEN DACRES, ALICE. QUEEN *pacing the Gallery. A writing-table in front.* QUEEN *comes to the table and writes and goes again, pacing the Gallery.*

Lady Clarence. Mine eyes are dim: what hath she written? read.

Alice. 'I am dying, Philip; come to me.'

Lady Magdalen. There—up and down, poor lady, up and down.

Alice. And how her shadow crosses one by one
The moonlight casements pattern'd on the wall,
Following her like her sorrow. She turns again.

[Queen *sits and writes, and goes again.*

Lady Clarence. What hath she written now?

Alice. Nothing; but 'come, come, come,' and all awry,
And blotted by her tears. This cannot last. [Queen *returns.*

Mary. I whistle to the bird has broken cage,
And all in vain. [*Sitting down.*
Calais gone—Guisnes gone, too—and Philip gone!

Lady Clarence. Dear Madam, Philip is but at the wars;
I cannot doubt but that he comes again;
And he is with you in a measure still.
I never look'd upon so fair a likeness
As your great King in armor there, his hand
Upon his helmet.

[*Pointing to the portrait of* Philip *on the wall.*

Mary. Doth he not look noble?
I had heard of him in battle over seas,
And I would have my warrior all in arms.
He said it was not courtly to stand helmeted
Before the Queen. He had his gracious moment,
Altho' you'll not believe me. How he smiles
As if he loved me yet!

Lady Clarence. And so he does.

Mary. He never loved me—nay, he could not love me.
It was his father's policy against France.
I am eleven years older than he,
Poor boy! [*Weeps.*

Alice. That was a lusty boy of twenty-seven; [*Aside.*
Poor enough in God's grace?

Mary. —And all in vain!
The Queen of Scots is married to the Dauphin,
And Charles, the lord of this low world, is gone;
And all his wars and wisdoms past away;
And in a moment I shall follow him.

Lady Clarence. Nay, dearest Lady, see your good physician.

Mary. Drugs—but he knows they cannot help me—says
That rest is all—tells me I must not think—
That I must rest—I shall rest by and by.
Catch the wild cat, cage him, and when he springs
And maims himself against the bars, say 'rest':
Why, you must kill him if you would have him rest—
Dead or alive you cannot make him happy.

Lady Clarence. Your Majesty has lived so pure a life,
And done such mighty things by Holy Church,
I trust that God will make you happy yet.

Mary. What is the strange thing happiness? Sit down here:
Tell me thine happiest hour.

Lady Clarence. I will, if that
May make your Grace forget yourself a little.

There runs a shallow brook across our field
For twenty miles, where the black crow flies five,
And doth so bound and babble all the way
As if itself were happy. It was May-time,
And I was walking with the man I loved.
I loved him, but I thought I was not loved.
And both were silent, letting the wild brook
Speak for us—till he stoop'd and gather'd one
From out a bed of thick forget-me-nots,
Look'd hard and sweet at me, and gave it me.
I took it, tho' I did not know I took it,
And put it in my bosom, and all at once
I felt his arms about me, and his lips——
Mary. O God! I have been too salck, too slack;
There are Hot Gospellers even among our guards—
Nobles we dared not touch. We have but burnt
The heretic priest, workmen, and women and children.
Wet, famine, ague, fever, storm, wreck, wrath,—
We have so play'd the coward; but by God's grace,
We'll follow Philip's leading, and set up
The Holy Office here—garner the wheat,
And burn the tares with unquenchable fire!
Burn!—
Fie, what a savor! tell the cooks to close
The doors of all the offices below.
Latimer!
Sit, we are private with our women here—
Ever a rough, blunt, and uncourtly fellow—
Thou light a torch that never will go out!
'Tis out—mine flames. Women, the Holy Father
Has ta'en the legateship from our cousin Pole—
Was that well done? and poor Pole pines of it,
As I do, to the death. I am but a woman,
I have no power.—Ah, weak and meek old man,
Seven-fold dishonor'd even in the sight
Of thine own sectaries—No, no. No pardon!—
Why that was false: there is the right hand still
Beckons me hence.
Sir, you were burnt for heresy, not for treason,
Remember that! 'twas I and Bonner did it,
And Pole; we are three to one—Have you found mercy there,
Grant it me here: and see, he smiles and goes,
Gentle as in life.
Alice. Madam, who goes? King Philip?
Mary. No, Philip comes and goes, but never goes.
Women, when I am dead,
Open my heart, and there you will find written
Two names, Philip and Calais; open his,—
So that he have one,—
You will find Philip only, policy, policy,—
Ay, worse than that—not one hour true to me!
Foul maggots crawling in a fester'd vice!
Adulterous to the very heart of Hell.
Hast thou a knife?
Alice. Ay, Madam, but o' God's mercy—
Mary. Fool, think'st thou I would peril mine own soul
By slaughter of the body? I could not, girl,

Not this way—callous with a constant stripe,
Unwoundable. The knife!
Alice. Take heed, take heed!
The blade is keen as death.
Mary. This Philip shall not
Stare in upon me in my haggardness;
Old, miserable, diseased,
Incapable of children. Come thou down.
[*Cuts out the picture and throws it down.*
Lie there. (*Wails*) O God, I have kill'd my Philip!
Alice. No,
Madam, you have but cut the canvas out;
We can replace it.
Mary. All is well then; rest—
I will to rest; he said, I must have rest.
[*Cries of* 'Elizabeth' *in the street.*
A cry! What's that? Elizabeth? revolt?
A new Northumberland, another Wyatt?
I'll fight it on the threshold of the grave.
Lady Clarence. Madam, your royal sister comes to see you.
Mary. I will not see her.
Who knows if Boleyn's daughter be my sister?
I will see none except the priest.
Your arm.
[*To* Lady Clarence.
O Saint of Aragon, with that sweet worn smile
Among thy patient wrinkles—Help me hence.
[*Exeunt.*

The PRIEST *passes. Enter* ELIZABETH *and* SIR WILLIAM CECIL.

Elizabeth. Good counsel yours—
No one in waiting? still,
As if the chamberlain were Death himself!
The room she sleeps in—is not this the way?
No, that way there are voices. Am I too late?
Cecil . . . God guide me lest I lose the way. [*Exit* Elizabeth.
Cecil. Many points weather'd, many perilous ones,
At last a harbor opens; but therein
Sunk rocks—they need fine steering—much it is
To be nor mad, nor bigot—have a mind—
Nor let Priests' talk, or dream of worlds to be,
Miscolor things about her—sudden touches
For him, or him—sunk rocks; no passionate faith—
But—if let be—balance and compromise;
Brave, wary, sane to the heart of her—a Tudor
School'd by the shadow of death—a Boleyn, too,
Glancing across the Tudor—not so well.

Enter ALICE.

How is the good Queen now?
Alice. Away from Philip.
Back in her childhood—prattling to her mother
Of her betrothal to the Emperor Charles,
And childlike-jealous of him again—and once
She thank'd her father sweetly for his book
Against that godless German. Ah, those days
Were happy. It was never merry world
In England, since the Bible came among us.
Cecil. And who says that?
Alice. It is a saying among the Catholics.
Cecil. It never will be merry world in England,
Till all men have their Bible, rich and poor.
Alice. The Queen is dying, or you dare not say it.

Enter ELIZABETH.

Elizabeth. The Queen is dead.
Cecil. Then here she stands! my homage.
Elizabeth. She knew me, and acknowledged me her heir,
Pray'd me to pay her debts, and keep the Faith;
Then clasp't the cross, and pass'd away in peace.
I left her lying still and beautiful,
More beautiful than in life. Why would you vex yourself,
Poor sister? Sir, I swear I have no heart
To be your Queen. To reign is restless fence,
Tierce, quart, and trickery. Peace is with the dead.
Her life was winter, for her spring was nipt:
And she loved much: pray God she be forgiven.

Cecil. Peace with the dead, who never were at peace!
Yet she loved one so much—I needs must say—
That never English monarch dying left
England so little.
Elizabeth. But with Cecil's aid
And others, if our person be secured
From traitor stabs—we will make England great.

Enter PAGET, *and other* LORDS OF THE COUNCIL, SIR RALPH BAGENHALL, *etc.*

Lords. God save Elizabeth, the Queen of England!
Bagenhall. God save the Crown! the Papacy is no more.
Paget (*aside*). Are we so sure of that?
Acclamation. God save the Queen!

HAROLD:

A DRAMA.

To His Excellency

THE RIGHT HON. LORD LYTTON,

Viceroy and Governor-General of India.

My dear Lord Lytton,—After old-world records—such as the Bayeux tapestry and the Roman de Rou,—Edward Freeman's History of the Norman Conquest, and your father's Historical Romance treating of the same times, have been mainly helpful to me in writing this Drama. Your father dedicated his 'Harold' to my father's brother; allow me to dedicate my 'Harold' to yourself.

A. TENNYSON.

SHOW-DAY AT BATTLE ABBEY, 1876.

A garden here—May breath and bloom of spring—
The cuckoo yonder from an English elm
Crying 'with my false egg I overwhelm
The native nest;' and fancy hears the ring
Of harness, and that deathful arrow sing,
And Saxon battleaxe clang on Norman helm.
Here rose the dragon-banner of our realm:
Here fought, here fell, our Norman-slander'd king.
O Garden blossoming out of English blood!
O strange hate-healer Time! We stroll and stare
Where might made right eight hundred years ago;
Might, right? ay good, so all things make for good—
But he and he, if soul be soul, are where
Each stands full face with all he did below.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

King Edward the Confessor.
Stigand, *created Archbishop of Canterbury by the Antipope Benedict.*
Aldred, *Archbishop of York.* The Norman Bishop of London.
Harold, *Earl of Wessex, afterwards King of England* } *Sons of Godwin.*
Tostig, *Earl of Northumbria* } *Sons of Godwin.*
Gurth, *Earl of East Anglia* } *Sons of Godwin.*
Leofwin, *Earl of Kent and Essex* } *Sons of Godwin.*
Wulfnoth } *Sons of Godwin.*
Count William of Normandy. William Rufus.
William Malet, *a Norman Noble.*[1]
Edwin, *Earl of Mercia* } *Sons of Alfgar of Mercia.*
Morcar, *Earl of Northumbria after Tostig* } *Sons of Alfgar of Mercia.*
Gamel, *a Northumbrian Thane.* Guy, *Count of Ponthieu.*
Rolf, *a Ponthieu Fisherman.* Hugh Margot, *a Norman Monk.*
Osgod *and* Athelric, *Canons from Waltham.*
The Queen, *Edward the Confessor's Wife, Daughter of Godwin.*
Aldwyth, *Daughter of Alfgar and Widow of Griffyth, King of Wales.*
Edith, *Ward of King Edward.*

Courtiers, Earls and Thanes, Men-at-Arms, Canons of Waltham, Fishermen, etc.

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[1] . . . quidam partim Normannus et Anglus
Compater Heraldi. (*Guy of Amiens*, 587.)

"A PERILOUS MEETING UNDER THE TALL PINES."—*Page 135.*

ACT I.

SCENE I.—London. The King's Palace.

(*A comet seen through the open window.*)

Aldwyth, Gamel, Courtiers *talking together.*

First Courtier. Lo! there once more—this is the seventh night!
Yon grimly-glaring, treble-brandish'd scourge
Of England!
Second Courtier. Horrible!
First Courtier. Look you, there's a star
That dances in it as mad with agony!
Third Courtier. Ay, like a spirit in Hell who skips and flies
To right and left, and cannot scape the flame.
Second Courtier. Steam'd upward from the undescendible
Abysm.
First Courtier. Or floated downward from the throne
Of God Almighty.
Aldwyth. Gamel, son of Orm,
What thinkest thou this means?
Gamel. War, my dear lady!
Aldwyth. Doth this affright thee?
Gamel. Mightily, my dear lady!
Aldwyth. Stand by me then, and look upon my face,
Not on the comet.

(*Enter* Morcar.)

Brother! why so pale?
Morcar. It glares in heaven, it flares upon the Thames,
The people are as thick as bees below,
They hum like bees,—they cannot speak—for awe;
Look to the skies, then to the river, strike
Their hearts, and hold their babies up to it.
I think that they would Molochize them too,
To have the heavens clear.
Aldwyth. They fright not me.

(*Enter* Leofwin, *after him* Gurth.)

Ask thou Lord Leofwin what he thinks of this!
Morcar. Lord Leofwin, dost thou believe, that these
Three rods of blood-red fire up yonder mean
The doom of England and the wrath of Heaven?
Bishop of London (*passing*). Did ye not cast with bestial violence
Our holy Norman bishops down from all
Their thrones in England? I alone remain.
Why should not Heaven be wroth?
Leofwin. With us, or thee?
Bishop of London. Did ye not outlaw your archbishop Robert,
Robert of Jumiéges—well-nigh murder him too?
Is there no reason for the wrath of Heaven?
Leofwin. Why then the wrath of Heaven hath three tails,
The devil only one.

[*Exit* Bishop of London.

(*Enter* Archbishop Stigand.)

Ask *our* Archbishop.
Stigand should know the purposes of Heaven.
Stigand. Not I. I cannot read the face of heaven;
Perhaps our vines will grow the better for it.
Leofwin (*laughing*). He can but read the king's face on his coins.
Stigand. Ay, ay, young lord, *there* the king's face is power.
Gurth. O father, mock not at a public fear,
But tell us, is this pendent hell in heaven
A harm to England?

Stigand. Ask it of King Edward!
And he may tell thee, *I* am a harm to England.
Old uncanonical Stigand—ask of *me*
Who had my pallium from an Anti-pope!
Not he the man—for in our windy world
What's up is faith, what's down is heresy.
Our friends, the Normans, holp to shake his chair.
I have a Norman fever on me, son,
And cannot answer sanely . . . What it means?
Ask our broad Earl.
[*Pointing to* HAROLD, *who enters.*
Harold (*seeing* Gamel). Hail, Gamel, son of Orm!
Albeit no rolling stone, my good friend Gamel,
Thou hast rounded since we met. Thy life at home
Is easier than mine here. Look! am I not
Work-wan, flesh-fallen?
Gamel. Art thou sick, good Earl?
Harold. Sick as an autumn swallow for a voyage,
Sick for an idle week of hawk and hound
Beyond the seas—a change! When camest thou hither?
Gamel. To-day, good Earl.
Harold. Is the North quiet, Gamel?
Gamel. Nay, there be murmurs, for thy brother breaks us
With over-taxing—quiet, ay, as yet—
Nothing as yet.
Harold. Stand by him, mine old friend,
Thou art a great voice in Northumberland!
Advise him: speak him sweetly, he will hear thee.
He is passionate but honest. Stand thou by him!
More talk of this to-morrow, if yon weird sign
Not blast us in our dreams.—Well, father Stigand—
[*To* Stigand, *who advances to him.*

Stigand (*pointing to the comet*). War there, my son? is that the doom of England?
Harold. Why not the doom of all the world as well?
For all the world sees it as well as England.
These meteors came and went before our day,
Not harming any: it threatens us no more
Than French or Norman. War? the worst that follows
Things that seem jerk'd out of the common rut
Of Nature is the hot religious fool,
Who, seeing war in heaven, for heaven's credit
Makes it on earth: but look, where Edward draws
A faint foot hither, leaning upon Tostig.
He hath learnt to love our Tostig much of late.
Leofwin. And *he* hath learnt, despite the tiger in him,
To sleek and supple himself to the king's hand.
Gurth. I trust the kingly touch that cures the evil
May serve to charm the tiger out of him.
Leofwin. He hath as much of cat as tiger in him.
Our Tostig loves the hand and not the man.
Harold. Nay! Better die than lie!

Enter KING, QUEEN, *and* TOSTIG.

Edward. In heaven signs!
Signs upon earth! signs everywhere! your Priests
Gross, worldly, simoniacal, unlearn'd!
They scarce can read their Psalter; and your churches
Uncouth, unhandsome, while in Normanland
God speaks thro' abler voices, as He dwells
In statelier shrines. I say not this, as being

Half Norman-blooded, nor as some have held,
Because I love the Norman better—no,
But dreading God's revenge upon this realm
For narrowness and coldness : and I say it
For the last time perchance, before I go
To find the sweet refreshment of the Saints.
I have lived a life of utter purity :
I have builded the great church of Holy Peter :
I have wrought miracles—to God the glory—
And miracles will in my name be wrought
Hereafter.—I have fought the fight and go—
I see the flashing of the gates of pearl—
And it is well with me, tho' some of you
Have scorn'd me—ay—but after I am gone
Woe, woe to England ! I have had a vision ;
The seven sleepers in the cave at Ephesus
Have turn'd from right to left.

Harold. My most dear Master,
What matters ? let them turn from left to right
And sleep again.

Tostig. Too hardy with thy king !
A life of prayer and fasting well may see
Deeper into the mysteries of heaven
Than thou, good brother.

Aldwyth (*aside*). Sees he into thine,
That thou wouldst have his promise for the crown ?

Edward. Tostig says true ; my son, thou art too hard,
Not stagger'd by this ominous earth and heaven :
But heaven and earth are threads of the same loom,
Play into one another, and weave the web
That may confound thee yet.

Harold. Nay, I trust not,
For I have served thee long and honestly.

Edward. I know it, son ; I am not thankless : thou
Hast broken all my foes, lighten'd for me
The weight of this poor crown, and left me time
And peace for prayer to gain a better one.
Twelve years of service ! England loves thee for it.
Thou art the man to rule her !

Aldwyth (*aside*). So, not Tostig !

Harold. And after those twelve years a boon, my king,
Respite, a holiday : thyself wast wont
To love the chase : thy leave to set my feet
On board, and hunt and hawk beyond the seas !

Edward. What with this flaming horror overhead ?

Harold. Well, when it passes then.

Edward. Ay if it pass.
Go not to Normandy—go not to Normandy.

Harold. And wherefore not, my king, to Normandy ?
Is not my brother Wulfnoth hostage there
For my dead father's loyalty to thee ?
I pray thee, let me hence and bring him home.

Edward. Not thee, my son : some other messenger.

Harold. And why not me, my lord, to Normandy ?
Is not the Norman Count thy friend and mine ?

Edward. I pray thee, do not go to Normandy.

Harold. Because my father drove the Normans out
Of England ?—That was many a summer gone—
Forgotten and forgiven by them and thee.

Edward. Harold, I will not yield thee leave to go.

Harold. Why then to Flanders. I will hawk and hunt

In Flanders.
Edward. Be there not fair woods and fields
In England? Wilful, wilful. Go—the Saints
Pilot and prosper all thy wandering out
And homeward. Tostig, I am faint again.
Son Harold, I will in and pray for thee.
[*Exit, leaning on* Tostig, *and followed by* Stigand, Morcar, *and* Courtiers.
Harold. What lies upon the mind of our good king
That he should harp this way on Normandy?
Queen. Brother, the king is wiser than he seems;
And Tostig knows it; Tostig loves the king.
Harold. And love should know; and—be the king so wise,—
Then Tostig too were wiser than he seems.
I love the man but not his phantasies.

(*Re-enter* TOSTIG.)

Well, brother,
When didst thou hear from thy Northumbria?
Tostig. When did I hear aught but this '*When*' from thee?
Leave me alone, brother, with my Northumbria:
She is *my* mistress, let *me* look to her!
The king hath made me Earl; make me not fool!
Nor make the King a fool, who made me Earl!
Harold. No, Tostig—lest I make myself a fool
Who made the King who made thee, make thee Earl.
Tostig. Why chafe me then? Thou knowest I soon go wild.
Gurth. Come, come! as yet thou art not gone so wild
But thou canst hear the best and wisest of us.
Harold. So says old Gurth, not I: yet hear! thine earldom,
Tostig, hath been a kingdom. Their old crown
Is yet a force among them, a sun set
But leaving light enough for Alfgar's house
To strike thee down by—nay, this ghastly glare
May heat their fancies.
Tostig. My most worthy brother,
Thou art the quietest man in all the world—
Ay, ay and wise in peace and great in war—
Pray God the people choose thee for their king!
But all the powers of the house of Godwin
Are not enframed in thee.
Harold. Thank the Saints, no!
But thou hast drain'd them shallow by thy tolls,
And thou art ever here about the King:
Thine absence well may seem a want of care.
Cling to their love; for, now the sons of Godwin
Sit topmost in the field of England, envy,
Like the rough bear beneath the tree, good brother,
Waits till the man let go.
Tostig. Good counsel truly!
I heard from my Northumbria yesterday.
Harold. How goes it then with thy Northumbria? Well?
Tostig. And wouldst thou that it went aught else than well?
Harold. I would it went as well as with mine earldom,
Leofwin's and Gurth's.
Tostig. Ye govern milder men.
Gurth. We have made them milder by just government.
Tostig. Ay, ever give yourselves your own good word.
Leofwin. An honest gift, by all the Saints, if giver
And taker be but honest! but they bribe

Each other, and so often, an honest world
Will not believe them.
Harold. I may tell thee, Tostig,
I heard from thy Northumberland to-day.
Tostig. From spies of thine to spy my nakedness
In my poor North!
Harold. There is a movement there,
A blind one—nothing yet.
Tostig. Crush it at once
With all the power I have!—I must —I will!—
Crush it half-born! Fool still? or wisdom there,
My wise head-shaking Harold?
Harold. Make not thou
The nothing something. Wisdom when in power
And wisest, should not frown as Power, but smile
As kindness, watching all, till the true *must*
Shall make her strike as Power: but when to strike—
O Tostig, O dear brother—If they prance,
Rein in, not lash them, lest they rear and run
And break both neck and axle.
Tostig. Good again!
Good counsel tho' scarce needed. Pour not water
In the full vessel running out at top
To swamp the house.
Leofwin. Nor thou be a wild thing
Out of the waste, to turn and bite the hand
Would help thee from the trap.
Tostig. Thou playest in tune.
Leofwin. To the deaf adder thee, that wilt not dance
However wisely charm'd.
Tostig. No more, no more!
Gurth. I likewise cry 'no more.' Unwholesome talk
For Godwin's house! Leofwin, thou hast a tongue!
Tostig, thou look'st as thou wouldst spring upon him.
St. Olaf, not while I am by! Come, come,
Join hands, let brethren dwell in unity;
Let kith and kin stand close as our shield-wall,
Who breaks us then? I say, thou hast a tongue,
And Tostig is not stout enough to bear it.
Vex him not, Leofwin.
Tostig. No, I am not vext,—
Altho' ye seek to vex me, one and all.
I have to make report of my good earldom
To the good king who gave it—not to you—
Not any of you.—I am not vext at all.
Harold. The king? the king is ever at his prayers;
In all that handles matter of the state
I am the king.
Tostig. That shalt thou never be
If I can thwart thee.
Harold. Brother, brother!
Tostig. Away!
[*Exit* Tostig.
Queen. Spite of this grisly star ye three must gall
Poor Tostig.
Leofwin. Tostig, sister, galls him-'self;
He cannot smell a rose but pricks his nose
Against the thorn, and rails against the rose.
Queen. I am the only rose of all the stock
That never thorn'd him; Edward loves him, so
Ye hate him. Harold always hated him.
Why—how they fought when boys—and, Holy Mary!
How Harold used to beat him!
Harold. Why, boys will fight.
Leofwin would often fight me, and I beat him.
Even old Gurth would fight. I had much ado
To hold mine own against old Gurth. Old Gurth,
We fought like great states for grave cause; but Tostig—

On a sudden—at a something—for a nothing—
The boy would fist me hard, and when we fought
I conquer'd, and he loved me none the less,
Till thou wouldst get him all apart, and tell him
That where he was but worsted, he was wrong'd.
Ah! thou hast taught the king to spoil him too;
Now the spoilt child sways both. Take heed, take heed;
Thou art the Queen; ye are boy and girl no more:
Side not with Tostig in any violence,
Lest thou be sideways guilty of the violence.

Queen. Come fall not foul on me. I leave thee, brother.

Harold. Nay, my good sister—

[*Exeunt* Queen, Harold, Gurth, *and* Leofwin.

Aldwyth. Gamel, son of Orm,
What thinkest thou this means?

[*Pointing to the comet.*

Gamel. War, my dear lady,
War, waste, plague, famine, all malignities.

Aldwyth. It means the fall of Tostig from his earldom.

Gamel. That were too small a matter for a comet!

Aldwyth. It means the lifting of the house of Alfgar.

Gamel. Too small! a comet would not show for that!

Aldwyth. Not small for thee, if thou canst compass it.

Gamel. Thy love?

Aldwyth. As much as I can give thee, man;
This Tostig is, or like to be, a tyrant;
Stir up thy people: oust him!

Gamel. And thy love?

Aldwyth. As much as thou canst bear.

Gamel. I can bear all,
And not be giddy.

Aldwyth. No more now: to-morrow.

SCENE II.—IN THE GARDEN. THE KING'S HOUSE NEAR LONDON. SUNSET.

Edith. Mad for thy mate, passionate nightingale . . .
I love thee for it—ay, but stay a moment;
He can but stay a moment: he is going.
I fain would hear him coming! . . . near me . . near,
Somewhere—To draw him nearer with a charm
Like thine to thine.

(*Singing.*)

Love is come with a song and a smile,
Welcome Love with a smile and a song:
Love can stay but a little while.
Why cannot he stay? They call him away:
Ye do him wrong, ye do him wrong;
Love will stay for a whole life long.

Enter HAROLD.

Harold. The nightingales in Haveringatte-Bower
Sang out their loves so loud, that Edward's prayers
Were deafen'd and he pray'd them dumb, and thus
I dumb thee too, my wingless nightingale! [*Kissing her.*

Edith. Thou art my music! Would their wings were mine
To follow thee to Flanders! Must thou go?

Harold. Not must, but will. It is but for one moon.

Edith. Leaving so many foes in Edward's hall
To league against thy weal. The Lady Aldwyth
Was here to-day, and when she touch'd on thee,
She stammer'd in her hate; I am sure she hates thee,
Pants for thy blood.

Harold. Well, I have given her cause—
I fear no woman.

Edith. Hate not one who felt
Some pity for thy hater! I am sure
Her morning wanted sunlight, she so praised
The convent and lone life—within the pale—
Beyond the passion. Nay—she held with Edward,
At least methought she held with holy Edward,
That marriage was half sin.
Harold. A lesson worth
Finger and thumb—thus (*snaps his fingers*). And my answer to it—
See here—an interwoven H and E!
Take thou this ring; I will demand his ward
From Edward when I come again. Ay, would she?
She to shut up my blossom in the dark!
Thou art *my* nun, thy cloister in mine arms.
Edith (*taking the ring*). Yea, but Earl Tostig—
Harold. That's a truer fear!
For if the North take fire, I should be back;
I shall be, soon enough.
Edith. Ay, but last night
An evil dream that ever came and went—
Harold. A gnat that vext thy pillow! Had I been by,
I would have spoil'd his horn. My girl, what was it?
Edith. Oh! that thou wert not going!
For so methought it was our marriage-morn,
And while we stood together, a dead man
Rose from behind the altar, tore away
My marriage ring, and rent my bridal veil;
And then I turn'd, and saw the church all fill'd
With dead men upright from their graves, and all
The dead men made at thee to murder thee,
But thou didst back thyself against a pillar,
And strike among them with thy battle-axe—
There, what a dream!
Harold. Well, well—a dream—no more!
Edith. Did not Heaven speak to men in dreams of old?
Harold. Ay—well—of old. I tell thee what, my child;
Thou hast misread this merry dream of thine,
Taken the rifted pillars of the wood
For smooth stone columns of the sanctuary,
The shadows of a hundred fat dead deer
For dead men's ghosts. True, that the battle-axe
Was out of place; it should have been the bow.—
Come, thou shalt dream no more such dreams; I swear it,
By mine own eyes—and these two sapphires—these
Twin rubies, that are amulets against all
The kisses of all kind of womankind
In Flanders, till the sea shall roll me back
To tumble at thy feet.
Edith. That would but shame me,
Rather than make me vain. The sea may roll
Sand, shingle, shore-weed, not the living rock
Which guards the land.
Harold. Except it be a soft one,
And undereaten to the fall. Mine amulet . . .
This last . . . upon thine eyelids, to shut in
A happier dream. Sleep, sleep, and thou shalt see
My grayhounds fleeting like a beam of light,
And hear my peregrine and her bells in heaven;
And other bells on earth, which yet are heaven's;
Guess what they be.

Edith. He cannot guess who knows.
Farewell, my king.
Harold. Not yet, but then—my queen. [*Exeunt.*

Enter ALDWYTH *from the thicket.*

Aldwyth. The kiss that charms thine eyelids into sleep,
Will hold mine waking. Hate him? I could love him
More, tenfold, than this fearful child can do;
Griffyth I hated: why not hate the foe
Of England? Griffyth when I saw him flee,
Chased deer-like up his mountains, all the blood
That should have only pulsed for Griffyth, beat
For his pursuer. I love him or think I love him.
If he were King of England, I his queen,
I might be sure of it. Nay, I do love him.—
She must be cloister'd somehow, lest the king
Should yield his ward to Harold's will. What harm?
She hath but blood enough to live, not love.—
When Harold goes and Tostig, shall I play
The craftier Tostig with him? fawn upon him?
Chime in with all? 'O thou more saint than king!'
And that were true enough. 'O blessed relics!'
'O Holy Peter!' If he found me thus,
Harold might hate me; he is broad and honest,
Breathing an easy gladness . . . not like Aldwyth . . .
For which I strangely love him. Should not England
Love Aldwyth, if she stay the feuds that part
The sons of Godwin from the sons of Alfgar
By such a marrying? Courage, noble Aldwyth!
Let all thy people bless thee! Our wild Tostig,
Edward hath made him Earl: he would be king:—
The dog that snapt the shadow, dropt the bone.—
I trust he may do well, this Gamel, whom
I play upon, that he may play the note
Whereat the dog shall howl and run, and Harold
Hear the king's music, all alone with him,
Pronounced his heir of England.
I see the goal and half the way to it.—
Peace-lover is our Harold for the sake
Of England's wholeness—so—to shake the North
With earthquake and disruption—some division—
Then fling mine own fair person in the gap
A sacrifice to Harold, a peace-offering,
A scape-goat marriage—all the sins of both
The houses on mine head—then a fair life
And bless the Queen of England.
Morcar (*coming from the thicket*). Art thou assured
By this, that Harold loves but Edith?
Aldwyth. Morcar!
Why creep'st thou like a timorous beast of prey
Out of the bush by night?
Morcar. I follow'd thee.
Aldwyth. Follow my lead, and I will make thee earl.
Morcar. What lead then?
Aldwyth. Thou shalt flash it secretly
Among the good Northumbrian folk, that I—
That Harold loves me—yea, and presently
That I and Harold are betroth'd—and last—

Perchance that Harold wrongs me; tho' I would not
That it should come to that.
Morcar. I will both flash
And thunder for thee.
Aldwyth. I said 'secretly;'
It is the flash that murders, the poor thunder
Never harm'd head.
Morcar. But thunder may bring down
That which the flash hath stricken.
Aldwyth. Down with Tostig!
That first of all.—And when doth Harold go?
Morcar. To-morrow—first to Bosham, then to Flanders.
Aldwyth. Not to come back till Tostig shall have shown
And redden'd with his people's blood the teeth
That shall be broken by us—yea, and thou
Chair'd in his place. Good-night, and dream thyself
Their chosen Earl. [*Exit* Aldwyth.
Morcar. Earl first, and after that
Who knows I may not dream myself their king!

ACT II.

SCENE I.—Seashore. Ponthieu. Night.

Harold *and his* Men, *wrecked.*

Harold. Friends, in that last inhospitable plunge
Our boat hath burst her ribs; but ours are whole;
I have but bark'd my hands.
Attendant. I dug mine into
My old fast friend the shore, and clinging thus
Felt the remorseless outdraught of the deep
Haul like a great strong fellow at my legs.
And then I rose and ran. The blast that came
So suddenly hath fallen as suddenly—
Put thou the comet and this blast together—
Harold. Put thou thyself and mother-wit together.
Be not a fool!

(*Enter* Fishermen *with torches*, Harold *going up to one of them*, Rolf.)

Wicked sea-will-o'-the-wisp!
Wolf of the shore! dog, with thy lying lights
Thou hast betray'd us on these rocks of thine!
Rolf. Ay, but thou liest as loud as the black herring-pond behind thee. We be fishermen; I came to see after my nets.
Harold. To drag us into them. Fishermen? devils!
Who, while ye fish for men with your false fires,
Let the great Devil fish for your own souls.
Rolf. Nay then, we be liker the blessed Apostles; *they* were fishers of men, Father Jean says.
Harold. I had liefer that the fish had swallowed me,
Like Jonah, than have known there were such devils.
What's to be done?
[*To his* Men—*goes apart with them.*
Fisherman. Rolf, what fish did swallow Jonah?
Rolf. A whale!
Fisherman. Then a whale to a whelk we have swallowed the King of England. I saw him over there. Look thee, Rolf, when I was down in the fever, *she* was down with the hunger, and thou didst stand by her and give her thy crabs, and set her up again, till now, by the patient Saints, she's as crabb'd as ever.
Rolf. And I'll give her my crabs again, when thou art down again.
Fisherman. I thank thee, Rolf. Run thou to Count Guy; he is hard at hand. Tell him what hath crept into our creel, and he will fee thee as freely as he will wrench this outlander's ransom out of him—and why not?

for what right had he to get himself wrecked on another man's land?

Rolf. Thou art the human-hearted-est,
Christian-charitiest of all crab-catch-ers.
Share and share alike! [*Exit.*

Harold (*to* Fisherman). Fellow, dost thou catch crabs?

Fisherman. As few as I may in a wind, and less than I would in a calm. Ay!

Harold. I have a mind that thou shalt catch no more.

Fisherman. How?

Harold. I have a mind to brain thee with mine axe.

Fisherman. Ay, do, do, and our great Count-crab will make his nippers meet in thine heart; he'll sweat it out of thee, he'll sweat it out of thee. Look, he's here! He'll speak for himself! Hold thine own, if thou canst!

Enter GUY, COUNT OF PONTHIEU.

Harold. Guy, Count of Ponthieu?

Guy. Harold, Earl of Wessex!

Harold. Thy villians with their lying lights have wreck'd us!

Guy. Art thou not Earl of Wessex?

Harold. In mine earldom
A man may hang gold bracelets on a bush,
And leave them for a year, and coming back
Find them again.

Guy. Thou art a mighty man
In thine own earldom!

Harold. Were such murderous liars
In Wessex—if I caught them, they should hang
Cliff-gibbeted for sea-marks; our sea-mew
Winging their only wail!

Guy. Ay, but my men
Hold that the shipwreckt are accursed of God;—
What hinders me to hold with mine own men?

Harold. The Christian manhood of the man who reigns!

Guy. Ay, rave thy worst, but in our oubliettes
Thou shalt or rot or ransom. Hale him hence! [*To one of his* Attendants.
Fly thou to William; tell him we have Harold.

SCENE II.—BAYEUX. PALACE.

COUNT WILLIAM *and* WILLIAM MALET.

William. We hold our Saxon woodcock in the springe,
But he begins to flutter. As I think
He was thine host in England when I went
To visit Edward.

Malet. Yea, and there, my lord,
To make allowance for their rougher fashions,
I found him all a noble host should be.

William. Thou art his friend: thou know'st my claim on England
Thro' Edward's promise: we have him in the toils.
And it were well, if thou shouldst let him feel,
How dense a fold of danger nets him round,
So that he bristle himself against my will.

Malet. What would I do, my lord, if I were you?

William. What wouldst thou do?

Malet. My lord, he is thy guest.

William. Nay, by the splendor of God, no guest of mine.
He came not to see me, had past me by
To hunt and hawk elsewhere, save for the fate
Which hunted *him* when that un-Saxon blast,
And bolts of thunder moulded in high heaven

To serve the Norman purpose, drave and crack'd
His boat on Ponthieu beach; where our friend Guy
Had wrung his ransom from him by the rack,
But that I stept between and purchased him,
Translating his captivity from Guy
To mine own hearth at Bayeux, where he sits
My ransom'd prisoner.

Malet. Well, if not with gold,
With golden deeds and iron strokes that brought
Thy war with Brittany to a goodlier close
Than else had been, he paid his ransom back.

William. So that henceforth they are not like to league
With Harold against *me*.

Malet. A marvel, how
He from the liquid sands of Coesnon
Haled thy shore-swallow'd, armor'd Normans up
To fight for thee again!

William. Perchance against
Their saver, save thou save him from himself.

Malet. But I should let him home again, my lord.

William. Simple! let fly the bird within the hand,
To catch the bird again within the bush!
No.
Smooth thou my way, before he clash with me;
I want his voice in England for the crown,
I want thy voice with him to bring him round;
And being brave he must be subtly cow'd,
And being truthful wrought upon to swear
Vows that he dare not break. England our own
Thro' Harold's help, he shall be my dear friend
As well as thine, and thou thyself shalt have
Large lordship there of lands and territory.

Malet. I knew thy purpose; he and Wulfnoth never
Have met, except in public; shall they meet
In private? I have often talk'd with Wulfnoth,
And stuff'd the boy with fears that these may act
On Harold when they meet.

William. Then let them meet!

Malet. I can but love this noble, honest Harold.

William. Love him! why not? thine is a loving office,
I have commission'd thee to save the man:
Help the good ship, showing the sunken rock,
Or he is wreckt for ever.

Enter WILLIAM RUFUS.

William Rufus. Father.

William. Well, boy.

William Rufus. They have taken away the toy thou gavest me,
The Norman knight.

William. Why, boy?

William Rufus. Because I broke
The horse's leg—it was mine own to break;
I like to have my toys, and break them too.

William. Well, thou shalt have another Norman knight!

William Rufus. And may I break his legs?

William. Yea,—get thee gone!

William Rufus. I'll tell them I have had my way with thee.
[*Exit.*

Malet. I never knew thee check thy will for ought
Save for the prattling of thy little ones.

William. Who shall be kings of England. I am heir
Of England by the promise of her king.

Malet. But there the great Assembly choose their king,

The choice of England is the voice of England.
William. I will be king of England by the laws,
The choice, and voice of England.
Malet. Can that be?
William. The voice of any people is the sword
That guards them, or the sword that beats them down.
Here comes the would-be what I will be . . . kinglike . . .
Tho' scarce at ease; for, save our meshes break,
More kinglike he than like to prove a king.

(*Enter* HAROLD, *musing, with his eyes on the ground.*)

He sees me not—and yet he dreams of me.
Earl, wilt thou fly my falcons this fair day?
They are of the best, strong-wing'd against the wind.
Harold (*looking up suddenly, having caught but the last word*). *Which* way does it blow?
William. Blowing for England, ha?
Not yet. Thou hast not learnt thy quarters here
The winds so cross and jostle among these towers.
Harold. Count of the Normans, thou hast ransom'd us,
Maintain'd, and entertain'd us royally!
William. And thou for us hast fought as loyally,
Which binds us friendship-fast for ever!
Harold. Good!
But lest we turn the scale of courtesy
By too much pressure on it, I would fain,
Since thou hast promised Wulfnoth home with us,
Be home again with Wulfnoth.
William. Stay—as yet
Thou hast but seen how Norman hands can strike,
But walk'd our Norman field, scarce touch'd or tasted
The splendors of our Court.
Harold. I am in no mood:
I should be as the shadow of a cloud
Crossing your light.
William. Nay, rest a week or two,
And we will fill thee full of Norman sun,
And send thee back among thine island mists
With laughter.
Harold. Count, I thank thee, but had rather
Breathe the free wind from off our Saxon downs,
Tho' charged with all the wet of all the west.
William. Why if thou wilt, so let it be—thou shalt.
That were a graceless hospitality
To chain the free guest to the banquet-board;
To-morrow we will ride with thee to Harfleur,
And see thee shipt, and pray in thy behalf
For happier homeward winds than that which crack'd
Thy bark at Ponthieu,—yet to us, in faith,
A happy one—whereby we came to know
Thy valor and thy value, noble earl.
Ay, and perchance a happy one for thee,
Provided—I will go with thee to-morrow—
Nay—but there be conditions, easy ones,
So thou, fair friend, will take them easily.

Enter PAGE.

Page. My lord, there is a post from over seas
With news for thee. [*Exit* Page.
William. Come, Malet, let us hear!
[*Exeunt* Count William *and* Malet.

Harold. Conditions? What conditions? pay him back
His ransom? 'easy'—that were easy —nay—
No money-lover he! What said the King?
'I pray you do not go to Normandy.'
And fate hath blown me hither, bound me too
With bitter obligation to the Count—
Have I not fought it out? What did he mean?
There lodged a gleaming grimness in his eyes,
Gave his shorn smile the lie. The walls oppress me,
And yon huge keep that hinders half the heaven.
Free air! free field!
[*Moves to go out. A* Man-at-arms *follows him.*
Harold (*to the* Man-at-arms). I need thee not. Why dost thou follow me?
Man-at-arms. I have the Count's commands to follow thee.
Harold. What then? Am I in danger in this court?
Man-at-arms. I cannot tell. I have the Count's commands.
Harold. Stand out of earshot then, and keep me still
In eyeshot.
Man-at-arms. Yea, lord Harold.
[*Withdraws.*
Harold. And arm'd men
Ever keep watch beside my chamber door,
And if I walk within the lonely wood,
There is an arm'd man ever glides behind!

(*Enter* MALET.)

Why am I follow'd, haunted, harass'd, watch'd?
See yonder!
[*Pointing to the* Man-at-arms.
Malet. 'Tis the good Count's care for thee!
The Normans love thee not, nor thou the Normans,
Or—so they deem.

Harold. But wherefore is the wind,
Which way soever the vane-arrow swing,
Not ever fair for England? Why but now
He said (thou heardst him) that I must not hence
Save on conditions.
Malet. So in truth he said.
Harold. Malet, thy mother was an Englishwoman;
There somewhere beats an English pulse in thee!
Malet. Well—for my mother's sake I love your England,
But for my father I love Normandy.
Harold. Speak for thy mother's sake, and tell me true.
Malet. Then for my Mother's sake, and England's sake
That suffers in the daily want of thee,
Obey the Count's conditions, my good friend.
Harold. How, Malet, if they be not honorable!
Malet. Seem to obey them.
Harold. Better die than lie!
Malet. Choose therefore whether thou wilt have thy conscience
White as a maiden's hand, or whether England
Be shattered into fragments.
Harold. News from England?
Malet. Morcar and Edwin have stirr'd up the Thanes
Against thy brother Tostig's governance;
And all the North of Humber is one storm.
Harold. I should be there, Malet, I should be there!
Malet. And Tostig in his own hall on suspicion
Hath massacred the Thane that was his guest,
Gamel, the son of Orm: and there be more
As villainously slain.
Harold. The wolf! the beast!
Ill news for guests, ha, Malet! More? What more?
What do they say? did Edward know of this?

Malet. They say, his wife was knowing and abetting.
Harold. They say, his wife!—To marry and have no husband
Makes the wife fool. My God, I should be there.
I'll hack my way to the sea.
Malet. Thou canst not, Harold;
Our Duke is all between thee and the sea,
Our Duke is all about thee like a God;
All passes block'd. Obey him, speak him fair,
For he is only debonair to those
That follow where he leads, but stark as death
To those that cross him.—Look thou, here is Wulfnoth!
I leave thee to thy talk with him alone;
How wan, poor lad! how sick and sad for home! [*Exit* Malet.
Harold (*muttering*). Go not to Normandy—go not to Normandy!

(*Enter* WULFNOTH.)

Poor brother! still a hostage!
Wulfnoth. Yea, and I
Shall see the dewy kiss of dawn no more
Make blush the maiden-white of our tall cliffs,
Nor mark the sea-bird rouse himself and hover
Above the windy ripple, and fill the sky
With free sea-laughter—never—save indeed
Thou canst make yield this iron-mooded Duke
To let me go.
Harold. Why, brother, so he will;
But on conditions. Canst thou guess at them?
Wulfnoth. Draw nearer,—I was in the corridor,
I saw him coming with his brother Odo
The Bayeux bishop, and I hid myself.
Harold. They did thee wrong who made thee hostage; thou
Wast ever fearful.
Wulfnoth. And he spoke—I heard him—
'This Harold is not of the royal blood,
Can have no right to the crown,' and Odo said,
'Thine is the right, for thine the might; he is here,
And yonder is thy keep.'
Harold. No, Wulfnoth, no.
Wulfnoth. And William laugh'd and swore that might was right,
Far as he knew in this poor world of ours—
'Marry, the Saints must go along with us,
And, brother, we will find a way,' said he—
Yea, yea, he would be king of England.
Harold. Never!
Wulfnoth. Yea, but thou must not this way answer *him*.
Harold. Is it not better still to speak the truth?
Wulfnoth. Not here, or thou wilt never hence nor I:
For in the racing toward this golden goal
He turns not right or left, but tramples flat
Whatever thwarts him; hast thou never heard
His savagery at Alençon,—the town
Hung out raw hides along their walls, and cried
'Work for the tanner.'
Harold. That had anger'd *me*
Had I been William.
Wulfnoth. Nay, but he had prisoners,
He tore their eyes out, sliced their hands away,
And flung them streaming o'er the battlements
Upon the heads of those who walk'd within—
O speak him fair, Harold, for thine own sake.
Harold. Your Welshman says, 'The Truth against the World,'

Much more the truth against myself.
Wulfnoth. Thyself?
But for my sake, oh brother! oh! for my sake!
Harold. Poor Wulfnoth! do they not entreat thee well?
Wulfnoth. I see the blackness of my dungeon loom
Across their lamps of revel, and beyond
The merriest murmurs of their banquet clank
The shackles that will bind me to the wall.
Harold. Too fearful still!
Wulfnoth. Oh no, no—speak him fair!
Call it to temporize; and not to lie;
Harold, I do not counsel thee to lie.
The man that hath to foil a murderous aim
May, surely, play with words.
Harold. Words are the man.
Not ev'n for thy sake, brother, would I lie.
Wulfnoth. Then for thine Edith?
Harold. There thou prick'st me deep.
Wulfnoth. And for our Mother England?
Harold. Deeper still.
Wulfnoth. And deeper still the deep down oubliette,
Down thirty feet below the smiling day—
In blackness—dogs' food thrown upon thy head.
And over thee the suns arise and set,
And the lark sings, the sweet stars come and go,
And men are at their markets, in their fields,
And woo their loves and have forgotten thee;
And thou art upright in thy living grave,
Where there is barely room to shift thy side,
And all thine England hath forgotten thee;
And he our lazy-pious Norman King,
With all his Normans round him once again,
Counts his old beads, and hath forgotten thee.
Harold. Thou art of my blood, and so methinks, my boy,
Thy fears infect me beyond reason. Peace!
Wulfnoth. And then our fiery Tostig, while thy hands
Are palsied here, if his Northumbrians rise
And hurl him from them,—I have heard the Normans
Count upon this confusion—may he not make
A league with William, so to bring him back?
Harold. That lies within the shadow of the chance.
Wulfnoth. And like a river in flood thro' a burst dam
Descends the ruthless Norman—our good King
Kneels mumbling some old bone—our helpless folk
Are wash'd away, wailing, in their own blood—
Harold. Wailing! not warring? Boy, thou hast forgotten
That thou art English.
Wulfnoth. Then our modest women—
I know the Norman license—thine own Edith—
Harold. No more! I will not hear thee—William comes.
Wulfnoth. I dare not well be seen in talk with thee.
Make thou not mention that I spake with thee.
[*Moves away to the back of the stage.*

Enter WILLIAM, MALET, *and* Officer.

Officer. We have the man that rail'd against thy birth.
William. Tear out his tongue.
Officer. He shall not rail again,
He said that he should see confusion fall
On thee and on thine house.
William. Tear out his eyes,
And plunge him into prison.
Officer. It shall be done.

[*Exit* Officer.

William. Look not amazed, fair earl! Better leave undone
Than do by halves—tongueless and eyeless, prison'd—

Harold. Better methinks have slain the man at once!

William. We have respect for man's immortal soul,
We seldom take man's life, except in war;
It frights the traitor more to maim and blind.

Harold. In mine own land I should have scorn'd the man,
Or lash'd his rascal back, and let him go.

William. And let him go? To slander thee again!
Yet in thine own land in thy father's day
They blinded my young kinsman, Alfred—ay,
Some said it was thy father's deed.

Harold. They lied.

William. But thou and he—whom at thy word, for thou
Art known a speaker of the truth, I free
From this foul charge—

Harold. Nay, nay, he freed himself
By oath and compurgation from the charge.
The king, the lords, the people clear'd him of it.

William. But thou and he drove our good Normans out
From England, and this rankles in us yet.
Archbishop Robert hardly scaped with life.

Harold. Archbishop Robert! Robert the Archbishop!
Robert of Jumiéges, he that—

Malet. Quiet! quiet!

Harold. Count! if there sat within the Norman chair
A ruler all for England—one who fill'd
All offices, all bishopricks with English—
We could not move from Dover to the Humber
Saving thro' Norman bishopricks—I say
Ye would applaud that Norman who should drive
The stranger to the fiends!

William. Why, that is reason!
Warrior thou art, and mighty wise withal!
Ay, ay, but many among our Norman lords
Hate thee for this, and press upon me—saying
God and the sea have given thee to our hands—
To plunge thee into life-long prison here:—
Yet I hold out against them, as I may,
Yea—would hold out, yea, tho' they should revolt—
For thou hast done the battle in my cause;
I am thy fastest friend in Normandy.

Harold. I am doubly bound to thee . . . if this be so.

William. And I would bind thee more, and would myself
Be bounden to thee more.

Harold. Then let me hence
With Wulfnoth to King Edward.

William. So we will.
We hear he hath not long to live.

Harold. It may be.

William. Why then the heir of England, who is he?

Harold. The Atheling is nearest to the throne.

William. But sickly, slight, half-witted and a child,
Will England have him king?

Harold. It may be, no.

William. And hath King Edward not pronounced his heir?

Harold. Not that I know.

William. When he was here in Normandy,
He loved us and we him, because we found him
A Norman of the Normans.

Harold. So did we.

William. A gentle, gracious, pure and saintly man!

"SHE, AND WITH HER THE RACE OF AYLMER, PAST."—*Page 138.*

And grateful to the hand that shielded him,
He promised that if ever he were king
In England, he would give his kingly voice
To me as his successor. Knowest thou this?
Harold. I learn it now.
William. Thou knowest I am his cousin,
And that my wife descends from Alfred?
Harold. Ay.
William. Who hath a better claim then to the crown
So that ye will not crown the Atheling?
Harold. None that I know . . . if that but hung upon
King Edward's will.
William. Wilt *thou* uphold my claim?
Malet (*aside to* Harold). Be careful of thine answer, my good friend.
Wulfnoth (*aside to* Harold). Oh! Harold, for my sake and for thine own!
Harold. Ay . . . if the king have not revoked his promise.
William. But hath he done it then?
Harold. Not that I know.
William. Good, good, and thou wilt help me to the crown?
Harold. Ay . . . if the Witan will consent to this.
William. Thou art the mightiest voice in England, man,
Thy voice will lead the Witan—shall I have it?
Wulfnoth (*aside to* Harold). Oh! Harold, if thou love thine Edith, ay.
Harold. Ay, if—
Malet (*aside to* Harold). Thine 'ifs' will sear thine eyes out—ay.
William. I ask thee, wilt thou help me to the crown?
And I will make thee my great Earl of Earls,
Foremost in England and in Normandy;
Thou shalt be verily king—all but the name—
For I shall most sojourn in Normandy;
And thou be my vice-king in England. Speak.
Wulfnoth (*aside to* Harold). Ay, brother—for the sake of England—ay.
Harold. My lord—
Malet (*aside to* Harold). Take heed now.
Harold. Ay.
William. I am content,
For thou art truthful, and thy word thy bond.
To-morrow will we ride with thee to Harfleur. [*Exit* William.
Malet. Harold, I am thy friend, one life with thee,
And even as I should bless thee saving mine,
I thank thee now for having saved thyself. [*Exit* Malet.
Harold. For having lost myself to save myself,
Said 'ay' when I meant 'no,' lied like a lad
That dreads the pendent scourge, said 'ay' for 'no'!
Ay! No!—he hath not bound me by an oath—
Is 'ay' an oath? is 'ay' strong as an oath?
Or is it the same sin to break my word
As break mine oath? He call'd my word my bond!
He is a liar who knows I am a liar,
And makes believe that he believes my word—
The crime be on his head—not bounden—no.

[*Suddenly doors are flung open, discovering in an inner hall* Count William *in his state robes, seated upon his throne, between two* Bishops, Odo of Bayeux *being one: in the centre of the hall an ark covered with cloth of gold; and on either side of it the Norman barons.*

Enter a JAILOR *before* William's *throne.*

William (*to* Jailor). Knave, hast thou let thy prisoner scape?

Jailor. Sir Count,
He had but one foot, he must have hopt away,
Yea, some familiar spirit must have help'd him.

William. Woe knave to thy familiar and to thee!
Give me thy keys. [*They fall clashing.*
Nay let them lie. Stand there and wait my will.
[*The* Jailor *stands aside.*

William (*to* Harold). Hast thou such trustless jailors in thy North?

Harold. We have few prisoners in mine earldom there,
So less chance for false keepers.

William. We have heard
Of thy just, mild, and equal governance;
Honor to thee! thou art perfect in all honor!
Thy naked word thy bond! confirm it now
Before our gather'd Norman baronage,
For they will not believe thee—as I believe.
[*Descends from his throne and stands by the ark.*
Let all men here bear witness of our bond! [*Beckons to* Harold, *who advances.*

Enter MALET *behind him.*

Lay thou thy hand upon this golden pall!
Behold the jewel of St. Pancratius
Woven into the gold. Swear thou on this!

Harold. What should I swear? Why should I swear on this?

William. (*savagely*). Swear thou to help me to the crown of England.

Malet (*whispering* Harold). My friend, thou hast gone too far to palter now.

Wulfnoth (*whispering* Harold). Swear thou to-day, to-morrow is thine own.

Harold. I swear to help thee to the crown of England . . .
According as King Edward promises.

William. Thou must swear absolutely, noble Earl.

Malet (*whispering*). Delay is death to thee, ruin to England.

Wulfnoth (*whispering*). Swear, dearest brother, I beseech thee, swear!

Harold (*putting his hand on the jewel*). I swear to help thee to the crown of England.

William. Thanks, truthful Earl; I did not doubt thy word,
But that my barons might believe thy word,
And that the Holy Saints of Normandy
When thou art home in England, with thine own,
Might strengthen thee in keeping of thy word,
I made thee swear.—Show him by whom he hath sworn.
[*The two* Bishops *advance, and raise the cloth of gold. The bodies and bones of Saints are seen lying in the ark.*
The holy bones of all the Canonized
From all the holiest shrines in Normandy!

Harold. Horrible! [*They let the cloth fall again.*

William. Ay, for thou hast sworn an oath
Which, if not kept, would make the hard earth rive
To the very Devil's horns, the bright sky cleave
To the very feet of God, and send her hosts
Of injured Saints to scatter sparks of plague
Thro' all your cities, blast your infants, dash

The torch of war among your standing corn,
Dabble your hearths with your own blood.—Enough!
Thou wilt not break it! I, the Count—the King—
Thy friend—am grateful for thine honest oath,
Not coming fiercely like a conqueror, now,
But softly as a bridegroom to his own.
For I shall rule according to your laws,
And make your ever-jarring Earldoms move
To music and in order—Angle, Jute,
Dane, Saxon, Norman, help to build a throne
Out-towering hers of France . . . The wind is fair
For England now . . . To-night we will be merry.
To-morrow will I ride with thee to Harfleur.

[*Exeunt* William *and all the Norman barons, etc.*

Harold. To-night we will be merry —and to-morrow—
Juggler and bastard—bastard—he hates that most—
William the tanner's bastard! Would he heard me!
O God, that I were in some wide, waste field
With nothing but my battle-axe and him
To spatter his brains! Why let earth rive, gulf in
These cursed Normans—yea and mine own self.
Cleave heaven, and send thy saints that I may say
Ev'n to their faces, 'If ye side with William
Ye are not noble.' How their pointed fingers
Glared at me! Am I Harold, Harold, son
Of our great Godwin? Lo! I touch mine arms,
My limbs—they are not mine—they are a liar's—
I mean to be a liar—I am not bound—
Stigand shall give me absolution for it—
Did the chest move? did it move? I am utter craven!
O Wulfnoth, Wulfnoth, brother, thou hast betray'd me!

Wulfnoth. Forgive me, brother, I will live here and die.

Enter PAGE.

Page. My lord! the Duke awaits thee at the banquet.

Harold. Where they eat dead men's flesh, and drink their blood.

Page. My Lord—

Harold. I know your Norman cookery is so spiced,
It masks all this.

Page. My lord! thou art white as death.

Harold. With looking on the dead. Am I so white?
Thy Duke will seem the darker. Hence, I follow. [*Exeunt.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.—THE KING'S PALACE. LONDON.

KING EDWARD *dying on a couch, and by him standing the* QUEEN, HAROLD, ARCHBISHOP STIGAND, GURTH, LEOFWIN, ARCHBISHOP ALDRED, ALDWYTH, *and* EDITH.

Stigand. Sleeping or dying there? If this be death,
Then our great Council wait to crown thee King—
Come hither, I have a power; [*To* Harold.
They call me near, for I am close to thee
And England—I, old shrivell'd Stigand, I,
Dry as an old wood-fungus on a dead tree
I have a power!

See here this little key about my neck!
There lies a treasure buried down in Ely:
If e'er the Norman grow too hard for thee,
Ask me for this at thy most need, son Harold,
At thy most need—not sooner.
Harold. So I will.
Stigand. Red gold—a hundred purses—yea, and more!
If thou canst make a wholesome use of these
To chink against the Norman, I do believe
My old crook'd spine would bud out two young wings
To fly to heaven straight with.
Harold. Thank thee, father!
Thou art English, Edward too is English now,
He hath clean repented of his Normanism.
Stigand. Ay, as the libertine repents who cannot
Make done undone, when thro' his dying sense
Shrills 'lost thro' thee.' They have built their castles here;
Our priories are Norman; the Norman adder
Hath bitten us; we are poison'd: our dear England
Is demi-Norman. He!—
[*Pointing to* King Edward, *sleeping.*
Harold. I would I were
As holy and as passionless as he!
That I might rest as calmly! Look at him—
The rosy face, and long down-silvering beard,
The brows unwrinkled as a summer mere.—
Stigand. A summer mere with sudden wreckful gusts
From a side-gorge. Passionless? How he flamed
When Tostig's anger'd earldom flung him, nay,
He fain had calcined all Northumbria
To one black ash, but that thy patriot passion
Siding with our great Council against Tostig,
Out-passion'd his! Holy? ay, ay, forsooth,
A conscience for his own soul, not his realm;
A twilight conscience lighted thro' a chink;
Thine by the sun; nay, by some sun to be,
When all the world hath learnt to speak the truth,
And lying were self-murder by that state
Which was the exception.
Harold. That sun may God speed!
Stigand. Come, Harold, shake the cloud off!
Harold. Can I, father?
Our Tostig parted cursing me and England;
Our sister hates us for his banishment;
He hath gone to kindle Norway against England,
And Wulfnoth is alone in Normandy.
For when I rode with William down to Harfleur,
'Wulfnoth is sick,' he said; 'he cannot follow;'
Then with that friendly-fiendly smile of his,
'We have learnt to love him, let him a little longer
Remain a hostage for the loyalty
Of Godwin's house.' As far as touches Wulfnoth
I that so prized plain word and naked truth
Have sinn'd against it—all in vain.
Leofwin. Good brother,
By all the truths that ever priest hath preach'd,
Of all the lies that ever men have lied,
Thine is the pardonablest.
Harold. May be so!
I think it so, I think I am a fool
To think it can be otherwise than so.
Stigand. Tut, tut, I have absolved thee: dost thou scorn me,
Because I had my Canterbury pallium,
From one whom they dispoped?

Harold. No, Stigand, no!
Stigand. Is naked truth actable in true life?
I have heard a saying of thy father Godwin,
That, were a man of state nakedly true,
Men would but take him for the craftier liar.
Leofwin. Be men less delicate than the Devil himself?
I thought that naked Truth would shame the Devil
The Devil is so modest.
Gurth. He never said it!
Leofwin. Be thou not stupid-honest, brother Gurth!
Harold. Better to be a liar's dog, and hold
My master honest, than believe that lying
And ruling men are fatal twins that cannot
Move one without the other. Edward wakes!—
Dazed—he hath seen a vision.
Edward. The green tree!
Then a great Angel past along the highest
Crying 'the doom of England,' and at once
He stood beside me, in his grasp a sword
Of lightnings, wherewithal he cleft the tree
From off the bearing trunk, and hurl'd it from him
Three fields away, and then he dash'd and drench'd,
He dyed, he soak'd the trunk with human blood,
And brought the sunder'd tree again, and set it
Straight on the trunk, that thus baptized in blood
Grew ever high and higher, beyond my seeing,
And shot out sidelong boughs across the deep
That dropt themselves, and rooted in far isles
Beyond my seeing: and the great Angel rose
And past again along the highest crying
'The doom of England!'—Tostig, raise my head!
[*Falls back senseless.*
Harold (*raising him*). Let Harold serve for Tostig!
Queen. Harold served
Tostig so ill, he cannot serve for Tostig!
Ay, raise his head, for thou hast laid it low!
The sickness of our saintly king, for whom
My prayers go up as fast as my tears fall,
I well believe, hath mainly drawn itself
From lack of Tostig—thou hast banish'd him.
Harold. Nay—but the council, and the king himself,
Queen. Thou hatest him, hatest him.
Harold (*coldly*). Ay—Stigand, unriddle
This vision, canst thou?
Stigand. Dotage!
Edward (*starting up*). It is finish'd.
I have built the Lord a house—the Lord hath dwelt
In darkness. I have built the Lord a house—
Palms, flowers, pomegranates, golden cherubim
With twenty-cubit wings from wall to wall—
I have built the Lord a house—sing, Asaph! clash
The cymbal, Heman! blow the trumpet, priest!
Fall, cloud, and fill the house—lo! my two pillars,
Jachin and Boaz!—
[*Seeing* Harold *and* Gurth.
Harold, Gurth,—where am I?
Where is the charter of our Westminster?
Stigand. It lies beside thee, king, upon thy bed.
Edward. Sign, sign at once—take, sign it, Stigand, Aldred!

Sign it, my good son Harold, Gurth, and Leofwin,
Sign it, my queen!
All. We have sign'd it.
Edward. It is finish'd!
The kingliest Abbey in all Christian lands,
The lordliest, loftiest minster ever built
To Holy Peter in our English isle!
Let me be buried there, and all our kings,
And all our just and wise and holy men
That shall be born hereafter. It is finish'd!
Hast thou had absolution for thine oath? [*To* Harold.
Harold. Stigand hath given me absolution for it.
Edward. Stigand is not canonical enough
To save thee from the wrath of Norman Saints.
Stigand. Norman enough! Be there no Saints of England
To help us from their brethren yonder?
Edward. Prelate,
The Saints are one, but those of Normanland
Are mightier than our own. Ask it of Aldred. [*To* Harold.
Aldred. It shall be granted him, my king; for he
Who vows a vow to strangle his own mother
Is guiltier keeping this, than breaking it.
Edward. O friends, I shall not over-live the day.
Stigand. Why then the throne is empty. Who inherits?
For tho' we be not bound by the king's voice
In making of a king, yet the king's voice
Is much toward his making. Who inherits?
Edgar the Atheling?
Edward. No, no, but Harold.
I love him: he hath served me: none but he
Can rule all England. Yet the curse is on him
For swearing falsely by those blessed bones;
He did not mean to keep his vow.
Harold. Not mean
To make our England Norman.
Edward. There spake Godwin,
Who hated all the Normans; but their Saints
Have heard thee, Harold.
Edith. Oh! my lord, my king!
He knew not whom he sware by.
Edward. Yea, I know
He knew not, but those heavenly ears have heard,
Their curse is on him; wilt thou bring another,
Edith, upon his head?
Edith. No, no, not I,
Edward. Why then, thou must not wed him.
Harold. Wherefore, wherefore?
Edward. O son, when thou didst tell me of thine oath,
I sorrow'd for my random promise given
To yon fox-lion. I did not dream then
I should be king.—My son, the Saints are virgins;
They love the white rose of virginity,
The cold, white lily blowing in her cell:
I have been myself a virgin; and I sware
To consecrate my virgin here to heaven—
The silent, cloister'd, solitary life,
A life of life-long prayer against the curse
That lies on thee and England.
Harold. No, no, no.
Edward. Treble denial of the tongue of flesh,
Like Peter's when he fell, and thou wilt have
To wail for it like Peter. O my son!
Are all oaths to be broken then, all promises
Made in our agony for help from heaven?

Son, there is one who loves thee: and a wife,
What matters who, so she be serviceable
In all obedience, as mine own hath been:
God bless thee, wedded daughter.
[*Laying his hand on the* Queen's *head.*
Queen. Bless thou too
That brother whom I love beyond the rest,
My banish'd Tostig.
Edward. All the sweet Saints bless him!
Spare and forbear him, Harold, if he comes!
And let him pass unscathed; he loves me, Harold!
Be kindly to the Normans left among us,
Who follow'd me for love! and dear son, swear
When thou art king, to see my solemn vow
Accomplish'd.
Harold. Nay, dear lord, for I have sworn
Not to swear falsely twice.
Edward. Thou wilt not swear?
Harold. I cannot.
Edward. Then on thee remains the curse,
Harold, if thou embrace her: and on thee,
Edith, if thou abide it,—
[*The* King *swoons;* Edith *falls and kneels by the couch.*
Stigand. He hath swoon'd!
Death? . . . no, as yet a breath.
Harold. Look up! look up!
Edith!
Aldred. Confuse her not; she hath begun
Her life-long prayer for thee.
Aldwyth. O noble Harold,
I would thou couldst have sworn.
Harold. For thine own pleasure?
Aldwyth. No, but to please our dying king, and those
Who make thy good their own—all England, Earl.
Aldred. *I* would thou couldst have sworn. Our holy king
Hath given his virgin lamb to Holy Church
To save thee from the curse.
Harold. Alas! poor man,
His promise brought it on me.
Aldred. O good son!
That knowledge made him all the carefuller
To find a means whereby the curse might glance
From thee and England.
Harold. Father, we so loved—
Aldred. The more the love, the mightier is the prayer;
The more the love, the more acceptable
The sacrifice of both your loves to heaven.
No sacrifice to heaven, no help from heaven;
That runs thro' all the faiths of all the world.
And sacrifice there must be, for the king
Is holy, and hath talk'd with God, and seen
A shadowing horror; there are signs in heaven—
Harold. Your comet came and went.
Aldred. And signs on earth!
Knowest thou Senlac hill?
Harold. I know all Sussex;
A good entrenchment for a perilous hour!
Aldred. Pray God that come not suddenly! There is one
Who passing by that hill three nights ago—
He shook so that he scarce could out with it—
Heard, heard—
Harold. The wind in his hair?
Aldred. A ghostly horn
Blowing continually, and faint battle-hymns,
And cries, and clashes, and the groans of men;
And dreadful shadows strove upon the hill,
And dreadful lights crept up from out the marsh—
Corpse-candles gliding over nameless graves—

Harold. At Senlac?
Aldred. Senlac.
Edward (*waking*). Senlac! Sanguelac,
The Lake of Blood!
Stigand. This lightning before death
Plays on the word,—and Normanizes too!
Harold. Hush, father, hush!
Edward. Thou uncanonical fool,
Wilt *thou* play with the thunder? North and South
Thunder together, showers of blood are blown
Before a never ending blast, and hiss
Against the blaze they cannot quench —a lake,
A sea of blood—we are drown'd in blood—for God
Has fill'd the quiver, and Death has drawn the bow—
Sanguelac! Sanguelac! the arrow! the arrow! [*Dies.*
Stigand. It is the arrow of death in his own heart—
And our great Council wait to crown thee King.

SCENE II.—IN THE GARDEN. THE KING'S HOUSE NEAR LONDON.

Edith. Crown'd, crown'd and lost, crown'd King—and lost to me!

(*Singing.*)

Two young lovers in winter weather,
None to guide them,
Walk'd at night on the misty heather;
Night, as black as a raven's feather;
Both were lost and found together,
None beside them.

That is the burthen of it—lost and found
Together in the cruel river Swale
A hundred years ago; and there's another,

Lost, lost, the light of day,

To which the lover answers lovingly

'I am beside thee.'
Lost, lost, we have lost the way.
'Love, I will guide thee.'
Whither, O whither? into the river,
Where we two may be lost together,
And lost for ever? 'Oh! never, oh! never,
Tho' we be lost and be found together.'

Some think they loved within the pale forbidden
By Holy Church: but who shall say? the truth
Was lost in that fierce North, where *they* were lost,
Where all good things are lost, where Tostig lost
The good hearts of his people. It is Harold!

(*Enter* HAROLD.)

Harold the King!
Harold. Call me not King, but Harold.
Edith. Nay, thou art King!
Harold. Thine, thine, or King or churl!
My girl, thou hast been weeping: turn not thou
Thy face away, but rather let me be
King of the moment to thee, and command
That kiss my due when subject, which will make
My kingship kinglier to me than to reign
King of the world without it.
Edith. Ask me not,
Lest I should yield it, and the second curse
Descend upon thine head, and thou be only
King of the moment over England.
Harold. Edith,
Tho' somewhat less a king to my true self
Than ere they crown'd me one, for I have lost

Somewhat of upright stature thro' mine oath,
Yet thee I would not lose, and sell not thou
Our living passion for a dead man's dream;
Stigand believed he knew not what he spake.
Oh God! I cannot help it, but at times
They seem to me too narrow, all the faiths
Of this grown world of ours, whose baby eye
Saw them sufficient. Fool and wise, I fear
This curse, and scorn it. But a little light!—
And on it falls the shadow of the priest;
Heaven yield us more! for better, Woden, all
Our cancell'd warrior-gods, our grim Walhalla,
Eternal war, than that the Saints at peace
The Holiest of our Holiest one should be
This William's fellow-tricksters;—better die
Than credit this, for death is death, or else
Lifts us beyond the lie. Kiss me—thou art not
A holy sister yet, my girl, to fear
There might be more than brother in my kiss,
And more than sister in thine own.
Edith. I dare not.
Harold. Scared by the church—'Love for a whole life long'
When was that sung?
Edith. Here to the nightingales.
Harold. Their anthems of no church, how sweet they are!
Nor kingly priest, nor priestly king to cross
Their billings ere they nest.
Edith. They are but of spring,
They fly the winter change—not so with us—
No wings to come and go.
Harold. But wing'd souls flying
Beyond all change and in the eternal distance
To settle on the Truth.
Edith. They are not so true,
They change their mates.
Harold. Do they? I did not know it.
Edith. They say thou art to wed the Lady Aldwyth.
Harold. They say, they say.
Edith. If this be politic,
And well for thee and England—and for her—
Care not for me who love thee.
Gurth (*calling*). Harold, Harold!
Harold. The voice of Gurth! (*Enter* GURTH.) Good even, my good brother!
Gurth. Good even, gentle Edith.
Edith. Good even, Gurth.
Gurth. Ill news hath come! Our hapless brother, Tostig—
He, and the giant King of Norway, Harold
Hardrada—Scotland, Ireland, Iceland, Orkney,
Are landed North of Humber, and in a field
So packt with carnage that the dykes and brooks
Were bridged and damm'd with dead, have overthrown
Morcar and Edwin.
Harold. Well then, we must fight.
How blows the wind?
Gurth. Against St. Valery
And William.
Harold. Well then, we will to the North.
Gurth. Ay, but worse news: this William sent to Rome,
Swearing thou swearest falsely by his Saints:
The Pope and that Archdeacon Hildebrand
His master, heard him, and have sent him back
A holy gonfanon, and a blessed hair
Of Peter, and all France, all Burgundy,
Poitou, all Christendom is raised against thee;

He hath cursed thee, and all those who fight for thee,
And given thy realm of England to the bastard.
Harold. Ha! ha!
Edith. Oh! laugh not! . . . Strange and ghastly in the gloom
And shadowing of this double thundercloud
That lours on England—laughter!
Harold. No, not strange!
This was old human laughter in old Rome
Before a Pope was born, when that which reign'd
Call'd itself God.—A kindly rendering
Of 'Render unto Cæsar.' . . . . . The Good Shepherd!
Take this, and render that.
Gurth. They have taken York.
Harold. The Lord was God and came as man—the Pope
Is man and comes as God.—York taken?
Gurth. Yea,
Tostig hath taken York!
Harold. To York then. Edith,
Hadst thou been braver, I had better braved
All—but I love thee and thou me—and that
Remains beyond all chances and all churches,
And that thou knowest.
Edith. Ay, but take back thy ring.
It burns my hand—a curse to thee and me.
I dare not wear it.
[*Proffers* Harold *the ring, which he takes.*
Harold. But I dare. God with thee!
[*Exeunt* Harold *and* Gurth.
Edith. The King hath cursed him, if he marry me;
The Pope hath cursed him, marry me or no!
God help me! I know nothing—can but pray
For Harold—pray, pray, pray—no help but prayer,
A breath that fleets beyond this iron world,
And touches Him that made it.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—In Northumbria.

Archbishop Aldred, Morcar, Edwin, *and* Forces. *Enter* Harold. *The standard of the golden Dragon of Wessex preceding him.*

Harold. What! are thy people sullen from defeat?
Our Wessex dragon flies beyond the Humber,
No voice to greet it.
Edwin. Let not our great king
Believe us sullen—only shamed to the quick
Before the king—as having been so bruised
By Harold, king of Norway; but our help
Is Harold, king of England. Pardon us, thou!
Our silence is our reverence for the king!
Harold. Earl of the Mercians! if the truth be gall,
Cram me not thou with honey, when our good hive
Needs every sting to save it.
Voices. Aldwyth, Aldwyth!
Harold. Why cry thy people on thy sister's name?
Morcar. She hath won upon our people thro' her beauty,
And pleasantness among them.
Voices. Aldwyth! Aldwyth!
Harold. They shout as they would have her for a queen.
Morcar. She hath followed with our host, and suffer'd all.
Harold. What would ye, men?
Voice. Our old Northumbrian crown,
And kings of our own choosing.
Harold. Your old crown
Were little help without our Saxon carles
Against Hardrada.
Voice. Little! we are Danes,
Who conquer'd what we walk on, our own field.

Harold. They have been plotting here! [*Aside.*
Voice. He calls us little!
Harold. The kingdoms of this world began with little,
A hill, a fort, a city—that reach'd a hand
Down to the field beneath it, 'Be thou mine,'
Then to the next, 'Thou also!' If the field
Cried out 'I am mine own;' another hill
Or fort, or city, took it, and the first
Fell, and the next became an Empire.
Voice. Yet
Thou art but a West Saxon: *we* are Danes!
Harold. My mother is a Dane, and I am English;
There is a pleasant fable in old books,
Ye take a stick, and break it; bind a score
All in one faggot, snap it over knee,
Ye cannot.
Voice. Hear King Harold! he says true!
Harold. Would ye be Norsemen?
Voices. No!
Harold. Or Norman?
Voices. No!
Harold. Snap not the faggot-band then.
Voice. That is true!
Voice. Ay, but thou art not kingly, only grandson
To Wulfnoth, a poor cow-herd.
Harold. This old Wulfnoth
Would take me on his knees and tell me tales
Of Alfred and of Athelstan the Great
Who drove you Danes; and yet he held that Dane,
Jute, Angle, Saxon, were or should be all
One England, for this cow-herd, like my father,
Who shook the Norman scoundrels off the throne,
Had in him kingly thoughts—a king of men,
Not made but born, like the great king of all,
A light among the oxen.
Voice. That is true!
Voice. Ay, and I love him now, for mine own father
Was great, and cobbled.
Voice. Thou art Tostig's brother,
Who wastes the land.
Harold. This brother comes to save
Your land from waste; I saved it once before,
For when your people banish'd Tostig hence,
And Edward would have sent a host against you,
Then I, who loved my brother, bad the king
Who doted on him, sanction your decree
Of Tostig's banishment, and choice of Morcar,
To help the realm from scattering.
Voice. King! thy brother,
If one may dare to speak the truth, was wrong'd.
Wild was he, born so: but the plots against him
Had madden'd tamer men.
Morcar. Thou art one of those
Who brake into Lord Tostig's treasure house
And slew two hundred of his following,
And now, when Tostig hath come back with power,
Are frighted back to Tostig.
Old Thane. Ugh! Plots and feuds!
This is my ninetieth birthday. Can ye not
Be brethren? Godwin, still at feud with Alfgar,
And Alfgar hates King Harold. Plots and feuds!
This is my ninetieth birthday!
Harold. Old man, Harold
Hates nothing; not *his* fault, if our two houses
Be less than brothers.
Voices. Aldwyth, Harold, Aldwyth!
Harold. Again! Morcar! Edwin! What do they mean?

Edwin. So the good king would deign to lend an ear
Not overscornful, we might chance—perchance—
To guess their meaning.
Morcar. Thine own meaning, Harold,
To make all England one, to close all feuds,
Mixing our bloods, that thence a king may rise
Half-Godwin and half-Alfgar, one to rule
All England beyond question, beyond quarrel.
Harold. Who sow'd this fancy here among the people?
Morcar. Who knows what sows itself among the people?
A goodly flower at times.
Harold. The Queen of Wales?
Why, Morcar, it is all but duty in her
To hate me; I have heard she hates me.
Morcar. No!
For I can swear to that, but cannot swear
That these will follow thee against the Norsemen,
If thou deny them this.
Harold. Morcar and Edwin,
When will ye cease to plot against my house?
Edwin. The king can scarcely dream that we, who know
His prowess in the mountains of the West,
Should care to plot against him in the North.
Morcar. Who dares arraign us, king, of such a plot?
Harold. Ye heard one witness even now.
Morcar. The craven!
There is a faction risen again for Tostig,
Since Tostig came with Norway—fright not love.
Harold. Morcar and Edwin, will ye, if I yield,
Follow against the Norseman?
Morcar. Surely, surely!
Harold. Morcar and Edwin, will ye upon oath,
Help us against the Norman?
Morcar. With good will;
Yea, take the Sacrament upon it, king.
Harold. Where is thy sister?
Morcar. Somewhere hard at hand.
Call and she comes.
[*One goes out, then enter* Aldwyth.
Harold. I doubt not but thou knowest
Why thou art summon'd.
Aldwyth. Why?—I stay with these,
Lest thy fierce Tostig spy me out alone,
And flay me all alive.
Harold. Canst thou love one
Who did discrown thine husband, unqueen thee?
Didst thou not love thine husband?
Aldwyth. Oh! my lord,
The nimble, wild, red, wiry, savage king—
That was, my lord, a match of policy.
Harold. Was it?
I knew him brave: he loved his land: he fain
Had made her great: his finger on her harp
(I heard him more than once) had in it Wales,
Her floods, her woods, her hills: had I been his,
I had been all Welsh.
Aldwyth. Oh, ay—all Welsh—and yet
I saw thee drive him up his hills—and women
Cling to the conquer'd, if they love, the more;
If not, they cannot hate the conqueror.
We never—oh! good Morcar, speak for us,
His conqueror conquer'd Aldwyth.
Harold. Goodly news!
Morcar. Doubt it not thou! Since Griffyth's head was sent
To Edward, she hath said it.
Harold. I had rather
She would have loved her husband. Aldwyth, Aldwyth,

Canst thou love me, thou knowing where I love?
Aldwyth. I can, my lord, for mine own sake, for thine,
For England, for thy poor white dove, who flutters
Between thee and the porch, but then would find
Her nest within the cloister, and be still.
Harold. Canst thou love one, who cannot love again?
Aldwyth. Full hope have I that love will answer love.
Harold. Then in the name of the great God, so be it!
Come, Aldred, join our hands before the hosts,
That all may see.
[Aldred *joins the hands of* Harold *and* Aldwyth *and blesses them.*
Voices. Harold, Harold and Aldwyth!
Harold. Set forth our golden Dragon, let him flap
The wings that beat down Wales!
Advance our Standard of the Warrior,
Dark among gems and gold; and thou, brave banner,
Blaze like a night of fatal stars on those
Who read their doom and die.
Where lie the Norsemen? on the Derwent? ay
At Stamford-bridge.
Morcar, collect thy men; Edwin, my friend—
Thou lingerest.—Gurth,—
Last night King Edward came to me in dreams—
The rosy face and long down-silvering beard—
He told me I should conquer:—
I am no woman to put faith in dreams.

(*To his army*).

Last night King Edward came to me in dreams,
And told me we should conquer.
Voices. Forward! Forward!
Harold and Holy Cross!
Aldwyth. The day is won!

SCENE II.—A PLAIN. BEFORE THE BATTLE OF STAMFORD-BRIDGE.

HAROLD *and his* Guard.

Harold. Who is it comes this way? Tostig? (Enter TOSTIG *with a small force.*) O brother,
What art thou doing here?
Tostig. I am foraging
For Norway's army.
Harold. I could take and slay thee.
Thou art in arms against us.
Tostig. Take and slay me,
For Edward loved me.
Harold. Edward bad me spare thee.
Tostig. I hate King Edward, for he join'd with thee
To drive me outlaw'd. Take and slay me, I say,
Or I shall count thee fool.
Harold. Take thee, or free thee,
Free thee or slay thee, Norway will have war;
No man would strike with Tostig, save for Norway.
Thou art nothing in thine England, save for Norway,
Who loves not thee but war. What dost thou here,
Trampling thy mother's bosom into blood?
Tostig. She hath wean'd me from it with such bitterness.
I come for mine own Earldom, my Northumbria;
Thou hast given it to the enemy of our house.
Harold. Northumbria threw thee off, she will not have thee,
Thou hast misused her: and, O crowning crime!
Hast murder'd thine own guest, the son of Orm,
Gamel, at thine own hearth.
Tostig. The slow, fat fool!
He drawl'd and prated so, I smote him suddenly,
I knew not what I did. He held with Morcar,—

I hate myself for all things that I do.
Harold. And Morcar holds with us. Come back with him.
Know what thou dost; and we may find for thee,
So thou be chasten'd by thy banishment,
Some easier earldom.
Tostig. What for Norway then?
He looks for land among us, he and his.
Harold. Seven feet of English land, or something more,
Seeing he is a giant.
Tostig. That is noble!
That sounds of Godwin.
Harold. Come thou back, and be
Once more a son of Godwin.
Tostig (*turns away*). O brother, brother,
O Harold—
Harold (*laying his hand on* Tostig's *shoulder*). Nay then, come thou back to us!
Tostig (*after a pause turning to him*). Never shall any man say that I, that Tostig
Conjured the mightier Harold from his North
To do the battle for me here in England,
Then left him for the meaner! thee!—
Thou hast no passion for the House of Godwin—
Thou hast but cared to make thyself a king—
Thou hast sold me for a cry.—
Thou gavest thy voice against me in the Council—
I hate thee, and despise thee, and defy thee.
Farewell for ever! [*Exit.*
Harold. On to Stamford-bridge!

SCENE III.

AFTER THE BATTLE OF STAMFORD-BRIDGE. BANQUET.

HAROLD *and* ALDWYTH. GURTH, LEOFWIN, MORCAR, EDWIN, *and other* Earls *and* Thanes.

Voices. Hail! Harold! Aldwyth! hail, bridegroom and bride!
Aldwyth (*talking with* Harold). Answer them thou!
Is this our marriage-banquet? Would the wines
Of wedding had been dash'd into the cups
Of victory, and our marriage and thy glory
Been drunk together! these poor hands but sew,
Spin, broider—would that they were man's to have held
The battle-axe by thee!
Harold. There *was* a moment
When being forced aloof from all my guard,
And striking at Hardrada and his madmen
I had wish'd for any weapon.
Aldwyth. Why art thou sad?
Harold. I have lost the boy who play'd at ball with me,
With whom I fought another fight than this
Of Stamford-bridge.
Aldwyth. Ay! ay! thy victories
Over our own poor Wales, when at thy side
He conquer'd with thee.
Harold. No—the childish fist
That cannot strike again.
Aldwyth. Thou art too kindly.
Why didst thou let so many Norsemen hence?
Thy fierce forekings had clench'd their pirate hides
To the bleak church doors, like kites upon a barn.
Harold. Is there so great a need to tell thee why?
Aldwyth. Yea, am I not thy wife?
Voices. Hail, Harold, Aldwyth! Bridegroom and bride!
Aldwyth. Answer them! [*To* Harold.
Harold (*to all*). Earls and Thanes! Full thanks for your fair greeting of my bride!
Earls, Thanes, and all our country men! the day,

Our day beside the Derwent will not shine
Less than a star among the goldenest hours
Of Alfred, or of Edward his great son,
Or Athelstan, or English Ironside
Who fought with Knut, or Knut who coming Dane
Died English. Every man about his king
Fought like a king; the king like his own man,
No better; one for all, and all for one,
One soul! and therefore have we shatter'd back
The hugest wave from Norseland ever yet
Surged on us, and our battle-axes broken
The Raven's wing, and dumb'd his carrion croak
From the gray sea for ever. Many are gone—
Drink to the dead who died for us, the living
Who fought and would have died, but happier lived,
If happier be to live; they both have life
In the large mouth of England, till *her* voice
Die with the world. Hail—hail!

Morcar. May all invaders perish like Hardrada!
All traitors fail like Tostig!
[*All drink but* Harold.

Aldwyth. Thy cup's full!

Harold. I saw the hand of Tostig cover it.
Our dear, dead, traitor-brother, Tostig, him
Reverently we buried. Friends, had I been here,
Without too large self-lauding I must hold
The sequel had been other than his league
With Norway, and this battle. Peace be with him!
He was not of the worst. If there be those
At banquet in this hall, and hearing me—
For there be those I fear who prick'd the lion
To make him spring, that sight of Danish blood
Might serve an end not English—peace with them
Likewise, if *they* can be at peace with what
God gave us to divide us from the wolf!

Aldwyth (*aside to* Harold). Make not our Morcar sullen: it is not wise.

Harold. Hail to the living who fought, the dead who fell!

Voices. Hail, hail!

First Thane. How ran that answer which King Harold gave
To his dead namesake, when he ask'd for England?

Leofwin. 'Seven feet of English earth, or something more,
Seeing he is a giant!'

First Thane. Then for the bastard
Six feet and nothing more!

Leofwin. Ay, but belike
Thou hast not learnt his measure

First Thane. By St. Edmund
I over-measure him. Sound sleep to the man
Here by dead Norway without dream or dawn!

Second Thane. What is he bragging still that he will come
To thrust our Harold's throne from under him?
My nurse would tell me of a molehill crying
To a mountain 'Stand aside and room for me!'

First Thane. Let him come! let him come. Here's to him, sink or swim! [*Drinks.*

Second Thane. God sink him!

First Thane. Cannot hands which had the strength
To shove that stranded iceberg off our shores,
And send the shatter'd North again to sea,

Scuttle his cockle-shell? What's Brunanburg
To Stamford-bridge? a war-crash, and so hard,
So loud, that, by St. Dunstan, old St. Thor—
By God, we thought him dead—but our old Thor
Heard his own thunder again, and woke and came
Among us again, and mark'd the sons of those
Who made this Britain England, break the North:

Mark'd how the war-axe swang,
Heard how the war-horn sang,
Mark'd how the spear-head sprang,
Heard how the shield-wall rang,
Iron on iron clang,
Anvil on hammer bang—

Second Thane. Hammer on anvil, hammer on anvil. Old dog,
Thou art drunk, old dog!
First Thane. Too drunk to fight with thee!
Second Thane. Fight thou with thine own double, not with me,
Keep that for Norman William!
First Thane. Down with William!
Third Thane. The washerwoman's brat!
Fourth Thane. The tanner's bastard!
Fifth Thane. The Falaise byblow!

[*Enter a* Thane, *from Pevensey, spatter'd with mud.*

Harold. Ay, but what late guest,
As haggard as a fast of forty days,
And caked and plaster'd with a hundred mires,
Hath stumbled on our cups?
Thane from Pevensey. My lord the King!
William the Norman, for the wind had changed—
Harold. I felt it in the middle of that fierce fight
At Stamford-bridge. William hath landed, ha?
Thane from Pevensey. Landed at Pevensey—I am from Pevensey—
Hath wasted all the land at Pevensey—
Hath harried mine own cattle—God confound him!
I have ridden night and day from Pevensey—
A thousand ships—a hundred thousand men—
Thousands of horses, like as many lions
Neighing and roaring as they leapt to land—
Harold. How oft in coming hast thou broken bread?
Thane from Pevensey. Some thrice, or so.
Harold. Bring not thy hollowness
On our full feast. Famine is fear, were it but
Of being starved. Sit down, sit down, and eat,
And, when again red-blooded, speak again;
(*Aside.*) The men that guarded England to the South
Were scatter'd to the harvest. . . . No power mine
To hold their force together. . . . Many are fallen
At Stamford-bridge . . . the people stupid-sure
Sleep like their swine . . . in South and North at once
I could not be.
(*Aloud.*) Gurth, Leofwin, Morcar, Edwin!
(*Pointing to the revellers.*) The curse of England! these are drown'd in wassail,
And cannot see the world but thro' their wines!
Leave them! and thee too, Aldwyth, must I leave—
Harsh is the news! hard is our honeymoon!
Thy pardon. (*Turning round to his attendants.*) Break the banquet up . . . Ye four!
And thou, my carrier-pigeon of black news,

"A SATYR, A SATYR, SEE, FOLLOWS."—*Page 152.*

Cram thy crop full, but come when thou art call'd. [*Exit* Harold.

ACT V.

SCENE I.—A Tent on a Mound, from which can be seen the Field of Senlac.

Harold, *sitting; by him standing* Hugh Margot *the* Monk, Gurth, Leofwin.

Harold. Refer my cause, my crown to Rome! . . . The wolf
Mudded the brook and predetermined all.
Monk,
Thou hast said thy say, and had my constant 'No'
For all but instant battle. I hear no more.
Margot. Hear me again—for the last time. Arise,
Scatter thy people home, descend the hill,
Lay hands of full allegiance in thy Lord's
And crave his mercy, for the Holy Father
Hath given this realm of England to the Norman.
Harold. Then for the last time, monk, I ask again
When had the Lateran and the Holy Father
To do with England's choice of her own king?
Margot. Earl, the first Christian Cæsar drew to the East
To leave the Pope dominion in the West.
He gave him all the kingdoms of the West.
Harold. So!—did he?—Earl—I have a mind to play
The William with thine eyesight and thy tongue.
Earl—ay—thou art but a messenger of William.
I am weary—go: make me not wroth with thee!
Margot. Mock-king, I am the messenger of God,
His Norman Daniel! Mene, Mene, Tekel!
Is thy wrath Hell, that I should spare to cry,
Yon heaven is wroth with *thee?* Hear me again!
Our Saints have moved the Church that moves the world,
And all the Heavens and very God: they heard—
They know King Edward's promise and thine—thine.
Harold. Should they not know free England crowns herself?
Not know that he nor I had power to promise?
Not know that Edward cancell'd his own promise?
And for *my* part therein—Back to that juggler, [*Rising.*
Tell him the Saints are nobler than he dreams,
Tell him that God is nobler than the Saints,
And tell him we stand arm'd on Senlac Hill,
And bide the doom of God.
Margot. Hear it thro' me.
The realm for which thou art foresworn is cursed,
The babe enwomb'd and at the breast is cursed,
The corpse thou whelmest with thine earth is cursed,
The soul who fighteth on thy side is cursed,
The seed thou sowest in thy field is cursed,
The steer wherewith thou plowest thy field is cursed,
The fowl that fleeth o'er thy field is cursed,
And thou, usurper, liar—
Harold. Out, beast monk! [*Lifting his hand to strike him.* Gurth *stops the blow.*
I ever hated monks.
Margot. I am but a voice
Among you: murder, martyr me if ye will—

Harold. Thanks, Gurth! The simple, silent, selfless man
Is worth a world of tonguesters. (*To* Margot.) Get thee gone!
He means the thing he says. See him out safe!
Leofwin. He hath blown himself as red as fire with curses.
An honest fool! Follow me, honest fool,
But if thou blurt thy curse among our folk,
I know not—I may give that egg-bald head
The tap that silences.
Harold. See him out safe.
[*Exeunt* Leofwin *and* Margot.
Gurth. Thou hast lost thine even temper, brother Harold!
Harold. Gurth, when I past by Waltham, my foundation
For men who serve the neighbor, not themselves,
I cast me down prone, praying; and, when I rose,
They told me that the Holy Rood had lean'd
And bow'd above me; whether that which held it
Had weaken'd, and the Rood itself were bound
To that necessity which binds us down;
Whether it bow'd at all but in their fancy;
Or if it bow'd, whether it symbol'd ruin
Or glory, who shall tell? but they were sad,
And somewhat sadden'd me.
Gurth. Yet if a fear,
Or shadow of a fear, lest the strange Saints
By whom thou swarest, should have power to balk
Thy puissance in this fight with him, who made
And heard thee swear—brother—*I* have not sworn—
If the king fall, may not the kingdom fall?
But if I fall, I fall, and thou art king;
And, if I win, I win, and thou art king;
Draw thou to London, there make strength to breast
Whatever chance, but leave this day to me.
Leofwin (*entering*). And waste the land about thee as thou goest,
And be thy hand as winter on the field,
To leave the foe no forage.
Harold. Noble Gurth!
Best son of Godwin! If I fall, I fall—
The doom of God! How should the people fight
When the King flies? And, Leofwin, art thou mad?
How should the King of England waste the fields
Of England, his own people?—No glance yet
Of the Northumbrian helmet on the heath?
Leofwin. No, but a shoal of wives upon the heath,
And someone saw thy willy-nilly nun
Vying a tress against our golden fern.
Harold. Vying a tear with our cold dews, a sigh
With these low-moaning heavens. Let her be fetch'd.
We have parted from our wife without reproach,
Tho' we have pierced thro' all her practices;
And that is well.
Leofwin. I saw her even now:
She hath not left us.
Harold. Nought of Morcar then?
Gurth. Nor seen, nor heard; thine, William's or his own
As wind blows, or tide flows: belike he watches,
If this war-storm in one of its rough rolls
Wash up that old crown of Northumberland.
Harold. I married her for Morcar —a sin against
The truth of love. Evil for good, it seems,
Is oft as childless of the good as evil

For evil.
Leofwin. Good for good hath borne at times
A bastard false as William.
Harold. Ay, if Wisdom
Pair'd not with Good. But I am somewhat worn,
A snatch of sleep were like the peace of God.
Gurth, Leofwin, go once more about the hill—
What did the dead man call it—Sanguelac,
The lake of blood?
Leofwin. A lake that dips in William
As well as Harold.
Harold. Like enough. I have seen
The trenches dug, the palisades up-rear'd
And wattled thick with ash and willow-wands;
Yea, wrought at them myself. Go round once more;
See all be sound and whole. No Norman horse
Can shatter England, standing shield by shield;
Tell that again to all.
Gurth. I will, good brother.
Harold. Our guardsman hath but toil'd his hand and foot,
I hand, foot, heart and head. Some wine! (*One pours wine into a goblet which he hands to* Harold.) Too much!
What? we must use our battle-axe to-day.
Our guardsmen have slept well, since we came in?
Leofwin. Ay, slept and snored. Your second-sighted man
That scared the dying conscience of the king,
Misheard their snores for groans. They are up again
And chanting that old song of Brunanburg
Where England conquer'd.
Harold. That is well. The Norman,
What is he doing?
Leofwin. Praying for Normandy;
Our scouts have heard the tinkle of their bells.
Harold. And our old songs are prayers for England too!
But by all Saints—
Leofwin. Barring the Norman!
Harold. Nay,
Were the great trumpet blowing doomsday dawn,
I needs must rest. Call when the Norman moves—
[*Exeunt all, but* Harold.
No horse—thousands of horses—our shield wall—
Wall—break it not—break not—break— [*Sleeps.*
Vision of Edward. Son Harold, I thy king, who came before
To tell thee thou shouldst win at Stamford-bridge,
Come yet once more, from where I am at peace,
Because I loved thee in my mortal day,
To tell thee thou shalt die on Senlac hill—
Sanguelac!
Vision of Wulfnoth. O brother, from my ghastly oubliette
I send my voice across the narrow seas—
No more, no more, dear brother, never-more—
Sanguelac!
Vision of Tostig. O brother, most unbrotherlike to me,
Thou gavest thy voice against me in my life,
I give my voice against thee from the grave—
Sanguelac!
Vision of Norman Saints. O hapless Harold! King but for an hour!
Thou swarest falsely by our blessed bones,
We give our voice against thee out of heaven!
Sanguelac! Sanguelac! The arrow! the arrow!
Harold (*starting up, battle-axe in hand*). Away!

My battle-axe against your voices. Peace!
The king's last word—'the arrow!' I shall die—
I die for England then, who lived for England—
What nobler? men must die.
I cannot fall into a falser world—
I have done no man wrong. Tostig, poor brother,
Art *thou* so anger'd?
Fain had I kept thine earldom in thy hands
Save for thy wild and violent will that wrench'd
All hearts of freemen from thee. I could do
No other than this way advise the king
Against the race of Godwin. Is it possible
That mortal men should bear their earthly heats
Into yon bloodless world, and threaten us thence
Unschool'd of Death? Thus then thou art revenged—
I left our England naked to the South
To meet thee in the North. The Norseman's raid
Hath helpt the Norman, and the race of Godwin
Hath ruin'd Godwin. No—our waking thoughts
Suffer a stormless shipwreck in the pools
Of sullen slumber, and arise again
Disjointed: only dreams—where mine own self
Takes part against myself! Why? for a spark
Of self-disdain born in me when I sware
Falsely to him, the falser Norman, over
His gilded ark of mummy-saints, by whom
I knew not that I sware,—not for myself—
For England—yet not wholly—

(*Enter* EDITH.)

Edith, Edith,
Get thou into thy cloister as the king
Will'd it be safe: the perjury-mongering Count
Hath made too good an use of Holy Church
To break her close! There the great God of truth
Fill all thine hours with peace!—A lying devil
Hath haunted me—mine oath—my wife—I fain
Had made my marriage not a lie; I could not:
Thou art my bride! and thou in after years
Praying perchance for this poor soul of mine
In cold, white cells beneath an icy moon—
This memory to thee!—and this to England,
My legacy of war against the Pope
From child to child, from Pope to Pope, from age to age,
Till the sea wash her level with her shores,
Or till the Pope be Christ's.

Enter ALDWYTH.

Aldwyth (*to* Edith). Away from him!
Edith. I will . . . I have not spoken to the king
One word; and one I must. Farewell! [*Going.*
Harold. Not yet.
Stay.
Edith. To what use?
Harold. The king commands thee, woman!
(*To* Aldwyth.)
Have thy two brethren sent their forces in?
Aldwyth. Nay, I fear not.
Harold. Then there's no force in thee!
Thou didst possess thyself of Edward's ear
To part me from the woman that I loved!

Thou didst arouse the fierce Northumbrians!
Thou hast been false to England and to me!—
As . . . in some sort . . . I have been false to thee.
Leave me. No more—Pardon on both sides—Go!
Aldwyth. Alas, my lord, I loved thee.
Harold (*bitterly*). With a love
Passing thy love for Griffyth! wherefore now
Obey my first and last commandment. Go!
Aldwyth. O Harold! husband! Shall we meet again?
Harold. After the battle—after the battle. Go.
Aldwyth. I go. (*Aside.*) That I could stab her standing there! [*Exit* Aldwyth.
Edith. Alas, my lord, she loved thee.
Harold. Never! never!
Edith. I saw it in her eyes!
Harold. I see it in thine.
And not on thee—nor England—fall God's doom!
Edith. On *thee?* on me. And thou art England! Alfred
Was England. Ethelred was nothing. England
Is but her king, and thou art Harold!
Harold. Edith,
The sign in heaven—the sudden blast at sea—
My fatal oath—the dead Saints—the dark dreams—
The Pope's Anathema—the Holy Rood
That bow'd to me at Waltham—Edith, if
I, the last English King of England—
Edith. No,
First of a line that coming from the people,
And chosen by the people—
Harold. And fighting for
And dying for the people—
Edith. Living! living!
Harold. Yea so, good cheer! thou art Harold, I am Edith!
Look not thus wan!
Edith. What matters how I look?
Have we not broken Wales and Norseland? slain,
Whose life was all one battle, incarnate war,
Their giant-king, a mightier man-in-arms
Than William.
Harold. Ay, my girl, no tricks in him—
No bastard he! when all was lost, he yell'd,
And bit his shield, and dash'd it on the ground,
And swaying his two-handed sword about him,
Two deaths at every swing, ran in upon us
And died so, and I loved him as I hate
This liar who made me liar. If Hate can kill,
And Loathing wield a Saxon battle-axe—
Edith. Waste not thy might before the battle!
Harold. No,
And thou must hence. Stigand will see thee safe,
And so—Farewell.
[*He is going, but turns back.*
The ring thou darest not wear,
I have had it fashion'd, see, to meet my hand.
[Harold *shows the ring which is on his finger.*
Farewell!
[*He is going, but turns back again.*
I am dead as Death this day to ought of earth's
Save William's death or mine.
Edith. Thy death!—to-day!
Is it not thy birthday?
Harold. Ay, that happy day!
A birthday welcome! happy days and many!
One—this! [*They embrace.*
Look, I will bear thy blessing into the battle
And front the doom of God.
Norman cries (*heard in the distance*). Ha Rou! Ha Rou!

Enter GURTH.

Gurth. The Norman moves!
Harold. Harold and Holy Cross!
[*Exeunt* Harold *and* Gurth.

Enter STIGAND.

Stigand. Our Church in arms—the lamb the lion—not
Spear into pruning-hook—the counter way—
Cowl, helm; and crozier, battle-axe. Abbot Alfwig,
Leofric, and all the monks of Peterboro'
Strike for the king; but I, old wretch, old Stigand,
With hands too limp to brandish iron—and yet
I have a power—would Harold ask me for it—
I have a power.
Edith. What power, holy father?
Stigand. Power now from Harold to command thee hence
And see thee safe from Senlac.
Edith. I remain!
Stigand. Yea, so will I, daughter, until I find
Which way the battle balance. I can see it
From where we stand: and, live or die, I would
I were among them!

Canons from Waltham (*singing without*).

Salva patriam
Sancte Pater,
Salva Fili,
Salva Spiritus,
Salva patriam,
Sancta Mater.[1]

Edith. Are those the blessed angels quiring, father?
Stigand. No, daughter, but the canons out of Waltham,
The king's foundation, that have follow'd him.
Edith. O God of battles, make their wall of shields
Firm as thy cliffs, strengthen their palisades!
What is that whirring sound?
Stigand. The Norman arrow!
Edith. Look out upon the battle—is he safe?
Stigand. The king of England stands between his banners.
He glitters on the crowning of the hill.
God save King Harold!
Edith. —chosen by his people
And fighting for his people!
Stigand. There is one
Come as Goliath came of yore—he flings
His brand in air and catches it again,
He is chanting some old warsong.
Edith. And no David
To meet him?
Stigand. Ay, there springs a Saxon on him,
Falls—and another falls.
Edith. Have mercy on us!
Stigand. Lo! our good Gurth hath smitten him to the death.
Edith. So perish all the enemies of Harold!

Canons (*singing*).

Hostis in Angliam
Ruit prædator,
Illorum, Domine,
Scutum scindatur!
Hostis per Angliae
Plagas bacchatur;
Casa crematur,
Pastor fugatur
Grex trucidatur—

Stigand. Illos trucida, Domine.
Edith. Ay, good father.

Canons (*singing*).

Illorum scelera
Pœna sequatur!

English cries. Harold and Holy Cross! Out! Out!

[1] The *a* throughout these Latin hymns should be sounded broad, as in 'father.'

Stigand. Our javelins
Answer their arrows. All the Norman foot
Are storming up the hill. The range of knights
Sit, each a statue on his horse, and wait.
English cries. Harold and God Almighty!
Norman cries. Ha Rou! Ha Rou!

Canons (*singing*).

Eques cum pedite
Præpediatur!
Illorum in lacrymas
Cruor fundatur!
Pereant, pereant,
Anglia precatur.

Stigand. Look, daughter, look.
Edith. Nay, father, look for *me!*
Stigand. Our axes lighten with a single flash
About the summit of the hill, and heads
And arms are sliver'd off and splinter'd by
Their lightning—and they fly—the Norman flies.
Edith. Stigand, O father, have we won the day?
Stigand. No, daughter, no—they fall behind the horse—
Their horse are thronging to the barricades;
I see the gonfanon of Holy Peter
Floating above their helmets—ha! he is down!
Edith. He down! Who down?
Stigand. The Norman Count is down.
Edith. So perish all the enemies of England!
Stigand. No, no, he hath risen again—he bares his face—
Shouts something—he points onward —all their horse
Swallow the hill locust-like, swarming up.
Edith. O God of battles, make his battle-axe keen
As thine own sharp-dividing justice, heavy
As thine own bolts that fall on crime-ful heads
Charged with the weight of heaven wherefrom they fall!

Canons (*singing*).

Jacta tonitrua
Deus bellator!
Surgas e tenebris,
Sis vindicator!
Fulmina, fulmina
Deus vastator!

Edith. O God of battles, they are three to one,
Make thou one man as three to roll them down!

Canons (*singing*).

Equus cum equite
Dejiciatur!
Acies, Acies
Prona sternatur!
Illorum lanceas
Frange Creator!

Stigand. Yea, yea, for how their lances snap and shiver
Against the shifting blaze of Harold's axe!
War-woodman of old Woden, how he fells
The mortal copse of faces! There! And there!
The horse and horseman cannot meet the shield,
The blow that brains the horseman cleaves the horse,
The horse and horseman roll along the hill,
They fly once more, they fly, the Norman flies!

Equus cum equite
Præcipitatur.

Edith. O God, the God of truth hath heard my cry.
Follow them, follow them, drive them to the sea!

Illorum scelera
Pœna sequatur!

Stigand. Truth! no; a lie; a trick, a Norman trick!

They turn on the pursuer, horse against foot,
They murder all that follow.
Edith. Have mercy on us!
Stigand. Hot-headed fools—to burst the wall of shields!
They have broken the commandment of the king!
Edith. *His* oath was broken—O holy Norman Saints,
Ye that are now of heaven, and see beyond
Your Norman shrines, pardon it, pardon it,
That he forsware himself for all he loved,
Me, me and all! Look out upon the battle!
Stigand. They thunder again upon the barricades.
My sight is eagle, but the strife so thick—
This is the hottest of it: hold, ash! hold, willow!
English cries. Out, out!
Norman cries. Ha Rou!
Stigand. Ha! Gurth hath leapt upon him
And slain him: he hath fallen.
Edith. And I am heard.
Glory to God in the Highest! fallen, fallen!
Stigand. No, no, his horse—he mounts another—wields
His war club, dashes it on Gurth, and Gurth,
Our noble Gurth, is down!
Edith. Have mercy on us!
Stigand. And Leofwin is down!
Edith. Have mercy on us!
O Thou that knowest, let not my strong prayer
Be weaken'd in thy sight, because I love
The husband of another!
Norman cries. Ha Rou! Ha Rou!
Edith. I do not hear our English war-cry.
Stigand. No.
Edith. Look out upon the battle—is he safe?
Stigand. He stands between the banners with the dead
So piled about him he can hardly move.
Edith (*takes up the war-cry*). Out! out!
Norman cries. Ha Rou!
Edith (*cries out*). Harold and Holy Cross!
Norman cries. Ha Rou! Ha Rou!
Edith. What is that whirring sound?
Stigand. The Norman sends his arrows up to Heaven,
They fall on those within the palisade!
Edith. Look out upon the hill—is Harold there?
Stigand. Sanguelac—Sanguelac—the arrow—the arrow!—away!

SCENE II.—Field of the Dead. Night.

Aldwyth *and* Edith.

Aldwyth. O Edith, art thou here? O Harold, Harold—
Our Harold—we shall never see him more.
Edith. For there was more than sister in my kiss,
And so the saints were wroth. I cannot love them,
For they are Norman saints—and yet I should—
They are so much holier than their harlot's son
With whom they play'd their game against the king!
Aldwyth. The king is slain, the kingdom overthrown!
Edith. No matter!
Aldwyth. How no matter, Harold slain?—
I cannot find his body. O help me thou!
O Edith, if I ever wrought against thee,
Forgive me thou, and help me here!
Edith. No matter!
Aldwyth. Not help me, nor forgive me?

Edith. So thou saidest.
Aldwyth. I say it now, forgive me!
Edith. Cross me not!
I am seeking one who wedded me in secret.
Whisper! God's angels only know it. Ha!
What art *thou* doing here among the dead?
They are stripping the dead bodies naked yonder,
And thou art come to rob them of their rings!
Aldwyth. O Edith, Edith, I have lost both crown
And husband.
Edith. So have I.
Aldwyth. I tell thee, girl,
I am seeking my dead Harold.
Edith. And I mine!
The Holy Father strangled him with a hair
Of Peter, and his brother Tostig helpt;
The wicked sister clapt her hands and laugh'd;
Then all the dead fell on him.
Aldwyth. Edith, Edith—
Edith. What was he like, this husband? like to thee?
Call not for help from me. I knew him not.
He lies not here: not close beside the standard.
Here fell the truest, manliest hearts of England.
Go further hence and find him.
Aldwyth. She is crazed!
Edith. That doth not matter either. Lower the light.
He must be here.

Enter two Canons, Osgod *and* Athelric, *with torches. They turn over the dead bodies and examine them as they pass.*

Osgod. I think that this is Thurkill.
Athelric. More likely Godric.
Osgod. I am sure this body
Is Alfwig, the king's uncle.
Athelric. So it is!
No, no—brave Gurth, one gash from brow to knee!
Osgod. And here is Leofwin.
Edith. And here is *He!*
Aldwyth. Harold? Oh no—nay, if it were—my God,
They have so maim'd and murder'd all his face
There is no man can swear to him.
Edith. But one woman!
Look you, we never mean to part again.
I have found him, I am happy.
Was there not someone ask'd me for forgiveness?
I yield it freely, being the true wife
Of this dead King, who never bore revenge.

Enter Count William *and* William Malet.

William. Who be these women? And what body is this?
Edith. Harold, thy better!
William. Ay, and what art thou?
Edith. His wife!
Malet. Not true, my girl, here is the Queen! [*Pointing out* Aldwyth.
William (*to* Aldwyth). Wast thou his Queen?
Aldwyth. I was the Queen of Wales.
William. Why then of England. Madam, fear us not.
(*To* Malet). Knowest thou this other?
Malet. When I visited England,
Some held she was his wife in secret—some—
Well—some believed she was his paramour.
Edith. Norman, thou liest! liars all of you,
Your Saints and all! *I* am his wife! and she—
For look, our marriage ring!
[*She draws it off the finger of* Harold.
I lost it somehow—

I lost it, playing with it when I was wild.
That bred the doubt! but I am wiser now . . .
I am too wise . . . Will none among you all
Bear me true witness—only for this once—
That I have found it here again?
[*She puts it on.*
And thou,
Thy wife am I for ever and evermore.
[*Falls on the body and dies.*
William. Death!—and enough of death for this one day,
The day of St. Calixtus, and the day,
My day when I was born.
Malet. And this dead king's
Who, king or not, hath kinglike fought and fallen,
His birthday, too. It seems but yester-even
I held it with him in his English halls,
His day, with all his rooftree ringing 'Harold,'
Before he fell into the snare of Guy;
When all men counted Harold would be king,
And Harold was most happy.
William. Thou art half English.
Take them away!
Malet, I vow to build a church to God
Here on the hill of battle; let our high altar
Stand where their standard fell . . . where these two lie.
Take them away, I do not love to see them.
Pluck the dead woman off the dead man, Malet!
Malet. Faster than ivy. Must I hack her arms off?
How shall I part them?
William. Leave them. Let them be!
Bury him and his paramour together.
He that was false in oath to me, it seems
Was false to his own wife. We will not give him
A Christian burial: yet he was a warrior,
And wise, yea truthful, till that blighted vow
Which God avenged to-day.
Wrap them together in a purple cloak
And lay them both upon the waste seashore
At Hastings, there to guard the land for which
He did forswear himself—a warrior—ay,
And but that Holy Peter fought for us,
And that the false Northumbrian held aloof,
And save for that chance arrow which the Saints
Sharpen'd and sent against him—who can tell?—
Three horses had I slain beneath me: twice
I thought that all was lost. Since I knew battle,
And that was from my boyhood, never yet—
No, by the splendor of God—have I fought men
Like Harold and his brethren, and his guard
Of English. Every man about his king
Fell where he stood. They loved him: and, pray God
My Normans may but move as true with me
To the door of death. Of one self-stock at first,
Make them again one people—Norman, English;
And English, Norman; we should have a hand
To grasp the world with, and a foot to stamp it . . .
Flat. Praise the Saints. It is over. No more blood!
I am king of England, so they thwart me not,
And I will rule according to their laws.
(*To* Aldwyth.) Madam, we will entreat thee with all honor.
Aldwyth. My punishment is more than I can bear.

BECKET.

To the Lord Chancellor,

THE RIGHT HONORABLE EARL OF SELBORNE.

My dear Selborne—To you, the honored Chancellor of our own day, I dedicate this dramatic memorial of your great predecessor;—which, altho' not intended in its present form to meet the exigencies of our modern theatre, has nevertheless—for so you have assured me—won your approbation.—Ever yours, TENNYSON.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Henry II. (*son of the Earl of Anjou*).
Thomas Becket, *Chancellor of England, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury*.
Gilbert Foliot, *Bishop of London*.
Roger, *Archbishop of York*.
Bishop of Hereford.
Hilary, *Bishop of Chichester*.
Jocelyn, *Bishop of Salisbury*.
John of Salisbury, Herbert of Bosham } *friends of Becket*.
Walter Map, *reputed author of 'Golias,' Latin poems against the priesthood*.
King Louis of France.
Geoffrey, *son of Rosamund and Henry*.
Grim, *a monk of Cambridge*.
Sir Reginald Fitzurse, Sir Richard de Brito, Sir William de Tracy, Sir Hugh de Morville } *the four knights of the King's household, enemies of Becket*.
De Broc of Saltwood Castle.
Lord Leicester.
Philip de Eleemosyna.
Two Knight Templars.
John of Oxford (*called the Swearer*).
Eleanor of Aquitaine, *Queen of England* (*divorced from Louis of France*).
Rosamund de Clifford.
Margery.

Knights, Monks, Beggars, etc.

PROLOGUE.

A Castle in Normandy. Interior of the Hall. Roofs of a City seen thro' Windows.

Henry *and* Becket *at chess.*

Henry. So then our good Archbishop Theobald
Lies dying.
Becket. I am grieved to know as much.
Henry. But we must have a mightier man than he
For his successor.
Becket. Have you thought of one?
Henry. A cleric lately poison'd his own mother,
And being brought before the courts of the Church,
They but degraded him. I hope they whipt him.
I would have hang'd him.
Becket. It is your move.
Henry. Well—there. [*Moves.*

The Church in the pell-mell of Stephen's time
Hath climb'd the throne and almost clutch'd the crown;
But by the royal customs of our realm
The Church should hold her baronies of me,
Like other lords amenable to law.
I'll have them written down and made the law.
Becket. My liege, I move my bishop.
Henry. And if I live,
No man without my leave shall excommunicate
My tenants or my household.
Becket. Look to your king.
Henry. No man without my leave shall cross the seas
To set the Pope against me—I pray your pardon.
Becket. Well—will you move?
Henry. There. [*Moves.*
Becket. Check—you move so wildly.
Henry. There then! [*Moves.*
Becket. Why—there then, for you see my bishop
Hath brought your king to a standstill. You are beaten.
Henry (*kicks over the board*). Why, there then—down go bishop and king together.
I loathe being beaten; had I fixt my fancy
Upon the game I should have beaten thee,
But that was vagabond.
Becket. Where, my liege? With Phryne,
Or Lais, or thy Rosamund, or another?
Henry. My Rosamund is no Lais, Thomas Becket;
And yet she plagues me too—no fault in her—
But that I fear the Queen would have her life.
Becket. Put her away, put her away, my liege!
Put her away into a nunnery!
Safe enough there from her to whom thou art bound
By Holy Church. And wherefore should she seek
The life of Rosamund de Clifford more
Than that of other paramours of thine?
Henry. How dost thou know I am not wedded to her?
Becket. How should I know?
Henry. That is my secret, Thomas.
Becket. State secrets should be patent to the statesman
Who serves and loves his king, and whom the king
Loves not as statesman, but true lover and friend.
Henry. Come, come, thou art but deacon, not yet bishop,
No, nor archbishop, nor my confessor yet.
I would to God thou wert, for I should find
An easy father confessor in thee.
Becket. St. Denis, that thou shouldst not. I should beat
Thy kingship as my bishop hath beaten it.
Henry. Hell take thy bishop then, and my kingship too!
Come, come, I love thee and I know thee, I know thee,
A doter on white pheasant-flesh at feasts,
A sauce-deviser for thy days of fish,
A dish-designer, and most amorous
Of good old red sound liberal Gascon wine:
Will not thy body rebel, man, if thou flatter it?
Becket. That palate is insane which cannot tell
A good dish from a bad, new wine from old.
Henry. Well, who loves wine loves woman.
Becket. So I do.
Men are God's trees, and women are God's flowers;
And when the Gascon wine mounts to my head,

The trees are all the statelier, and the flowers
Are all the fairer.
Henry. And thy thoughts, thy fancies?
Becket. Good dogs, my liege, well train'd, and easily call'd
Off from the game.
Henry. Save for some once or twice,
When they ran down the game and worried it.
Becket. No, my liege, no!—not once—in God's name, no!
Henry. Nay, then, I take thee at thy word—believe thee
The veriest Galahad of old Arthur's hall.
And so this Rosamund, my true heart-wife,
Not Eleanor—she whom I love indeed
As a woman should be loved—Why dost thou smile
So dolorously?
Becket. My good liege, if a man
Wastes himself among women, how should he love
A woman, as a woman should be loved?
Henry. How shouldst thou know that never hast loved one?
Come, I would give her to thy care in England
When I am out in Normandy or Anjou.
Becket. My lord, I am your subject, not your——
Henry. Pander.
God's eyes! I know all that—not my purveyor
Of pleasures, but to save a life—her life;
Ay, and the soul of Eleanor from hell-fire.
I have built a secret bower in England, Thomas,
A nest in a bush.
Becket. And where, my liege?
Henry (*whispers*). Thine ear.
Becket. That's lone enough.
Henry (*laying paper on table*). This chart here mark'd '*Her Bower*,' Take, keep it, friend. See, first, a circling wood,
A hundred pathways running every-way,
And then a brook, a bridge; and after that
This labyrinthine brickwork maze in maze,
And then another wood, and in the midst
A garden and my Rosamund. Look, this line—
The rest you see is color'd green—but this
Draws thro' the chart to her.
Becket. This blood-red line?
Henry. Ay! blood, perchance, except thou see to her.
Becket. And where is she? There in her English nest?
Henry. Would God she were—no, here within the city.
We take her from her secret bower in Anjou
And pass her to her secret bower in England.
She is ignorant of all but that I love her.
Becket. My liege, I pray thee let me hence: a widow
And orphan child, whom one of thy wild barons——
Henry. Ay, ay, but swear to see to her in England.
Becket. Well, well, I swear, but not to please myself.
Henry. Whatever come between us?
Becket. What should come
Between us, Henry?
Henry. Nay—I know not, Thomas.
Becket. What need then? Well—whatever come between us.
[*Going.*
Henry. A moment! thou didst help me to my throne
In Theobald's time, and after by thy wisdom
Hast kept it firm from shaking; but now I,
For my realm's sake, myself must be the wizard

To raise that tempest which will set it trembling
Only to base it deeper. I, true son
Of Holy Church—no croucher to the Gregories
That tread the kings their children underheel—
Must curb her; and the Holy Father, while
This Barbarossa butts him from his chair,
Will need my help—be facile to my hands.
Now is my time. Yet—lest there should be flashes
And fulminations from the side of Rome,
An interdict on England—I will have
My young son Henry crown'd the King of England,
That so the Papal bolt may pass by England,
As seeming his, not mine, and fall abroad.
I'll have it done—and now.

Becket. Surely too young
Even for this shadow of a crown; and tho'
I love him heartily, I can spy already
A strain of hard and headstrong in him. Say,
The Queen should play his kingship against thine!

Henry. I will not think so, Thomas. Who shall crown him?
Canterbury is dying.

Becket. The next Canterbury.

Henry. And who shall he be, my friend Thomas? Who?

Becket. Name him; the Holy Father will confirm him.

Henry (*lays his hand on* Becket's *shoulder*). Here!

Becket. Mock me not. I am not even a monk.
Thy jest—no more. Why—look—is this a sleeve
For an archbishop?

Henry. But the arm within
Is Becket's, who hath beaten down my foes.

Becket. A soldier's, not a spiritual arm.

Henry. I lack a spiritual soldier, Thomas—
A man of this world and the next to boot.

Becket. There's Gilbert Foliot.

Henry. He! too thin, too thin.
Thou art the man to fill out the Church robe;
Your Foliot fasts and fawns too much for me.

Becket. Roger of York.

Henry. Roger is Roger of York.
King, Church, and State to him but foils wherein
To set that precious jewel, Roger of York.
No.

Becket. Henry of Winchester?

Henry. Him who crown'd Stephen—King Stephen's brother! No; too royal for me.
And I'll have no more Anselms.

Becket. Sire, the business
Of thy whole kingdom waits me: let me go.

Henry. Answer me first.

Becket. Then for thy barren jest
Take thou mine answer in bare commonplace—
Nolo episcopari.

Henry. Ay, but *Nolo Archiepiscopari*, my good friend,
Is quite another matter.

Becket. A more awful one.
Make *me* archbishop! Why, my liege, I know
Some three or four poor priests a thousand times
Fitter for this grand function. *Me* archbishop!
God's favor and king's favor might so clash
That thou and I—— That were a jest indeed!

Henry. Thou angerest me, man: I do not jest.

Enter ELEANOR *and* SIR REGINALD FITZURSE.

Eleanor (*singing*). Over! the sweet summer closes,

The reign of the roses is done——

Henry (*to* Becket, *who is going*). Thou shalt not go. I have not ended with thee.

Eleanor (*seeing chart on table*). This chart with the red line! her bower! whose bower?

Henry. The chart is not mine, but Becket's: take it, Thomas.

Eleanor. Becket! O—ay—and these chessmen on the floor — the king's crown broken! Becket hath beaten thee again—and thou hast kicked down the board. I know thee of old.

Henry. True enough, my mind was set upon other matters.

Eleanor. What matters? State matters? love matters?

Henry. My love for thee, and thine for me.

Eleanor. Over! the sweet summer closes,
The reign of the roses is done;
Over and gone with the roses,
And over and gone with the sun.

Here; but our sun in Aquitaine lasts longer. I would I were in Aquitaine again—your north chills me.

Over! the sweet summer closes,
And never a flower at the close;
Over and gone with the roses,
And winter again and the snows.

That was not the way I ended it first—but unsymmetrically, preposterously, illogically, out of passion, without art—like a song of the people. Will you have it? The last Parthian shaft of a forlorn Cupid at the King's left breast, and all left-handedness and under-handedness.

And never a flower at the close,
Over and gone with the roses,
Not over and gone with the rose.

True, one rose will outblossom the rest, one rose in a bower. I speak after my fancies, for I am a Troubadour, you know, and won the violet at Toulouse; but my voice is harsh here, not in tune, a nightingale out of season; for marriage, rose or no rose, has killed the golden violet.

Becket. Madam, you do ill to scorn wedded love.

Eleanor. So I do. Louis of France loved me, and I dreamed that I loved Louis of France: and I loved Henry of England, and Henry of England dreamed that he loved me; but the marriage-garland withers even with the putting on, the bright link rusts with the breath of the first after-marriage kiss, the harvest moon is the ripening of the harvest, and the honeymoon is the gall of love; he dies of his honeymoon. I could pity this poor world myself that it is no better ordered.

Henry. Dead is he, my Queen? What, altogether? Let me swear nay to that by this cross on thy neck. God's eyes! what a lovely cross! What jewels!

Eleanor. Doth it please you? Take it and wear it on that hard heart of yours—there. [*Gives it to him.*

Henry (*puts it on*). On this left breast before so hard a heart,
To hide the scar left by thy Parthian dart.

Eleanor. Has my simple song set you jingling? Nay, if I took and translated that hard heart into our Provençal facilities, I could so play about it with the rhyme——

Henry. That the heart were lost in the rhyme and the matter in the metre. May we not pray you, Madam, to spare us the hardness of your facility?

Eleanor. The wells of Castaly are not wasted upon the desert. We did but jest.

Henry. There's no jest on the brows of Herbert there. What is it, Herbert?

Enter HERBERT OF BOSHAM.

Herbert. My liege, the good Archbishop is no more.

Henry. Peace to his soul!

Herbert. I left him with peace on

his face—that sweet other-world smile, which will be reflected in the spiritual body among the angels. But he longed much to see your Grace and the Chancellor ere he past, and his last words were a commendation of Thomas Becket to your Grace as his successor in the archbishopric.

Henry. Ha, Becket! thou remember-est our talk!

Becket. My heart is full of tears—I have no answer.

Henry. Well, well, old men must die, or the world would grow mouldy, would only breed the past again. Come to me to-morrow. Thou hast but to hold out thy hand. Meanwhile the revenues are mine. A-hawking, a-hawking! If I sit, I grow fat. [*Leaps over the table and exit.*

Becket. He did prefer me to the chancellorship,
Believing I should ever aid the Church—
But have I done it? He commends me now
From out his grave to this archbishopric.

Herbert. A dead man's dying wish should be of weight.

Becket. *His* should. Come with me. Let me learn at full
The manner of his death, and all he said.

[*Exeunt* Herbert *and* Becket.

Eleanor. Fitzurse, that chart with the red line—thou sawest it—her bower.

Fitzurse. Rosamund's?

Eleanor. Ay—there lies the secret of her whereabouts, and the King gave it to his Chancellor.

Fitzurse. To this son of a London merchant—how your Grace must hate him.

Eleanor. Hate him? as brave a soldier as Henry and a goodlier man: but thou—dost thou love this Chancellor, that thou hast sworn a voluntary allegiance to him?

Fitzurse. Not for my love toward him, but because he had the love of the King. How should a baron love a beggar on horseback, with the retinue of three kings behind him, outroyalling royalty? Besides, he holp the King to break down our castles, for the which I hate him.

Eleanor. For the which I honor him. Statesman not Churchman he. A great and sound policy that: I could embrace him for it: you could not see the King for the kinglings.

Fitzurse. Ay, but he speaks to a noble as tho' he were a churl, and to a churl as if he were a noble.

Eleanor. Pride of the plebeian!

Fitzurse. And this plebeian like to be Archbishop!

Eleanor. True, and I have an inherited loathing of these black sheep of the Papacy. Archbishop? I can see further into a man than our hot-headed Henry, and if there ever come feud between Church and Crown, and I do not then charm this secret out of our loyal Thomas, I am not Eleanor.

Fitzurse. Last night I followed a woman in the city here. Her face was veiled, but the back methought was Rosamund—his paramour, thy rival. I can feel for thee.

Eleanor. Thou feel for me!—paramour—rival! King Louis had no paramours, and I loved him none the more. Henry had many, and I loved him none the less—now neither more nor less—not at all; the cup's empty. I would she were but his paramour, for men tire of their fancies; but I fear this one fancy hath taken root, and borne blossom too, and she, whom the King loves indeed, is a power in the State. Rival!—ay, and when the King passes, there may come a crash and embroilment as in Stephen's time; and her children—canst thou not—that secret matter which would heat the King against thee (*whispers him and he starts*). Nay, that is safe with me as with thyself: but canst thou not—thou art drowned in debt—thou shalt have our love, our silence, and our gold—canst

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thou not—if thou light upon her—free me from her?

Fitzurse. Well, Madam, I have loved her in my time.

Eleanor. No, my bear, thou hast not. My Courts of Love would have held thee guiltless of love—the fine attractions and repulses, the delicacies, the subtleties.

Fitzurse. Madam, I loved according to the main purpose and intent of nature.

Eleanor. I warrant thee! thou wouldst hug thy Cupid till his ribs cracked—enough of this. Follow me this Rosamund day and night, whithersoever she goes; track her, if thou canst, even into the King's lodging, that I may (*clenches her fist*)—may at least have my cry against him and her,—and thou in thy way shouldst be jealous of the King, for thou in thy way didst once, what shall I call it, affect her thine own self.

Fitzurse. Ay, but the young colt winced and whinnied and flung up her heels; and then the King came honeying about her, and this Becket, her father's friend, like enough staved us from her.

Eleanor. Us!

Fitzurse. Yea, by the Blessed Virgin! There were more than I buzzing round the blossom—De Tracy—even that flint De Brito.

Eleanor. Carry her off among you; run in upon her and devour her, one and all of you; make her as hateful to herself and to the King, as she is to me.

Fitzurse. I and all would be glad to wreak our spite on the rosefaced minion of the King, and bring her to the level of the dust, so that the King——

Eleanor. Let her eat it like the serpent, and be driven out of her paradise.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—Becket's House in London.

Chamber barely furnished. Becket *unrobing.* Herbert of Bosham *and* Servant.

Servant. Shall I not help your lordship to your rest?

Becket. Friend, am I so much better than thyself
That thou shouldst help me? Thou art wearied out
With this day's work, get thee to thine own bed.
Leave me with Herbert, friend.
[*Exit* Servant.
Help me off, Herbert, with this—and this.

Herbert. Was not the people's blessing as we past
Heart-comfort and a balsam to thy blood?

Becket. The people know their Church a tower of strength,
A bulwark against Throne and Baronage.
Too heavy for me, this; off with it, Herbert!

Herbert. Is it so much heavier than thy Chancellor's robe?

Becket. No; but the Chancellor's and the Archbishop's
Together more than mortal man can bear.

Herbert. Not heavier than thine armor at Thoulouse?

Becket. O Herbert, Herbert, in my chancellorship
I more than once have gone against the Church.

Herbert. To please the King?

Becket. Ay, and the King of kings,
Or justice; for it seem'd to me but just
The Church should pay her scutage like the lords.
But hast thou heard this cry of Gilbert Foliot
That I am not the man to be your Primate,
For Henry could not work a miracle—
Make an Archbishop of a soldier?

Herbert. Ay,

For Gilbert Foliot held himself the man.
Becket. Am I the man? My mother, ere she bore me,
Dream'd that twelve stars fell glittering out of heaven
Into her bosom.
Herbert. Ay, the fire, the light,
The spirit of the twelve Apostles enter'd
Into thy making.
Becket. And when I was a child,
The Virgin, in a vision of my sleep,
Gave me the golden keys of Paradise. Dream,
Or prophecy, that?
Herbert. Well, dream and prophecy both.
Becket. And when I was of Theobald's household, once—
The good old man would sometimes have his jest—
He took his mitre off, and set it on me,
And said, 'My young Archbishop—thou wouldst make
A stately Archbishop!' Jest or prophecy there?
Herbert. Both, Thomas, both.
Becket. Am I the man? That rang
Within my head last night, and when I slept
Methought I stood in Canterbury Minster,
And spake to the Lord God, and said, 'O Lord,
I have been a lover of wines, and delicate meats,
And secular splendors, and a favorer
Of players, and a courtier, and a feeder
Of dogs and hawks, and apes, and lions, and lynxes.
Am *I* the man?' And the Lord answer'd me,
'Thou art the man, and all the more the man.'
And then I asked again, 'O Lord my God,
Henry the King hath been my friend, my brother,
And mine uplifter in this world, and chosen me
For this thy great archbishopric, believing
That I should go against the Church with him,
And I shall go against him with the Church,
And I have said no word of this to him:
Am *I* the man?' And the Lord answer'd me,
'Thou art the man, and all the more the man.'
And thereupon, methought, He drew toward me,
And smote me down upon the Minster floor.
I fell.
Herbert. God make not thee, but thy foes, fall.
Becket. I fell. Why fall? Why did He smite me? What?
Shall I fall off—to please the King once more?
Not fight—tho' somehow traitor to the King—
My truest and mine utmost for the Church?
Herbert. Thou canst not fall that way. Let traitor be;
For how have fought thine utmost for the Church,
Save from the throne of thine archbishopric?
And how been made Archbishop hadst thou told him,
'I mean to fight mine utmost for the Church,
Against the King'?
Becket. But dost thou think the King
Forced mine election?
Herbert. I do think the King
Was potent in the election, and why not?
Why should not Heaven have so inspired the King?
Be comforted. Thou art the man—be thou
A mightier Anselm.
Becket. I do believe thee, then. I am the man.

And yet I seem appall'd—on such a sudden
At such an eagle-height I stand and see
The rift that runs between me and the King.
I served our Theobald well when I was with him;
I served King Henry well as Chancellor;
I am his no more, and I must serve the Church.
This Canterbury is only less than Rome,
And all my doubts I fling from me like dust,
Winnow and scatter all scruples to the wind,
And all the puissance of the warrior,
And all the wisdom of the Chancellor,
And all the heap'd experiences of life,
I cast upon the side of Canterbury—
Our holy mother Canterbury, who sits
With tatter'd robes. Laics and barons, thro'
The random gifts of careless kings, have graspt
Her livings, her advowsons, granges, farms,
And goodly acres—we will make her whole;
Not one rood lost. And for these Royal customs,
These ancient Royal customs—they *are* Royal,
Not of the Church—and let them be anathema,
And all that speak for them anathema.

Herbert. Thomas, thou art moved too much.

Becket. O Herbert, here
I gash myself asunder from the King,
Tho' leaving each, a wound; mine own, a grief
To show the scar for ever—his, a hate
Not ever to be heal'd.

Enter ROSAMUND DE CLIFFORD, *flying from* SIR REGINALD FITZURSE. *Drops her veil.*

Becket. Rosamund de Clifford!

Rosamund. Save me, father, hide me—they follow me—and I must not be known.

Becket. Pass in with Herbert there.

[*Exeunt* Rosamund *and* Herbert *by side door.*

Enter FITZURSE.

Fitzurse. The Archbishop!

Becket. Ay! what wouldst thou, Reginald?

Fitzurse. Why—why, my lord, I follow'd—follow'd one——

Becket. And then what follows? Let me follow thee.

Fitzurse. It much imports me I should know her name.

Becket. What her?

Fitzurse. The woman that I follow'd hither.

Becket. Perhaps it may import her all as much
Not to be known.

Fitzurse. And what care I for that?
Come, come, my lord Archbishop; I saw that door
Close even now upon the woman.

Becket. Well?

Fitzurse (*making for the door*). Nay, let me pass, my lord, for I must know.

Becket. Back, man!

Fitzurse. Then tell me who and what she is.

Becket. Art thou so sure thou followedst anything?
Go home, and sleep thy wine off, for thine eyes
Glare stupid-wild with wine.

Fitzurse (*making to the door*). I must and will.
I care not for thy new archbishopric.

Becket. Back, man, I tell thee! What!
Shall I forget my new archbishopric
And smite thee with my crozier on the skull?
'Fore God, I am a mightier man than thou.

Fitzurse. It well befits thy new archbishopric
To take the vagabond woman of the street
Into thine arms!
Becket. O drunken ribaldry!
Out, beast! out, bear!
Fitzurse. I shall remember this.
Becket. Do, and begone!
[*Exit* Fitzurse.
[*Going to the door, sees* De Tracy. Tracy, what dost thou here?
De Tracy. My lord, I follow'd Reginald Fitzurse.
Becket. Follow him out!
De Tracy. I shall remember this Discourtesy. [*Exit.*
Becket. Do. These be those baron-brutes
That havock'd all the land in Stephen's day.
Rosamund de Clifford.

Re-enter ROSAMUND *and* HERBERT.

Rosamund. Here am I.
Becket. Why here?
We gave thee to the charge of John of Salisbury,
To pass thee to thy secret bower to-morrow.
Wast thou not told to keep thyself from sight?
Rosamund. Poor bird of passage! so I was; but, father,
They say that you are wise in winged things,
And know the ways of Nature. Bar the bird
From following the fled summer—a chink—he's out,
Gone! And there stole into the city a breath
Full of the meadows, and it minded me
Of the sweet woods of Clifford, and the walks
Where I could move at pleasure, and I thought
Lo! I must out or die.
Becket. Or out *and* die.
And what hast thou to do with this Fitzurse?
Rosamund. Nothing. He sued my hand. I shook at him.
He found me once alone. Nay—nay—I cannot
Tell you: my father drove him and his friends,
De Tracy and De Brito, from our castle.
I was but fourteen and an April then.
I heard him swear revenge.
Becket. Why will you court it
By self-exposure? flutter out at night?
Make it so hard to save a moth from the fire?
Rosamund. I have saved many of 'em. You catch 'em, so,
Softly, and fling them out to the free air.
They burn themselves *within*-door.
Becket. Our good John
Must speed you to your bower at once. The child
Is there already.
Rosamund. Yes—the child—the child—
O rare, a whole long day of open field.
Becket. Ay, but you go disguised.
Rosamund. O rare again!
We'll baffle them, I warrant. What shall it be?
I'll go as a nun.
Becket. No.
Rosamund. What, not good enough
Even to play at nun?
Becket. Dan John with a nun,
That Map, and these new railers at the Church
May plaister his clean name with scurrilous rhymes!
No!
Go like a monk, cowling and clouding up
That fatal star, thy Beauty, from the squint
Of lust and glare of malice. Good night! good night!
Rosamund. Father, I am so tender to all hardness!
Nay, father, first thy blessing.
Becket. Wedded?
Rosamund. Father!

Becket. Well, well! I ask no more. Heaven bless thee! hence!
Rosamund. O, holy father, when thou seest him next,
Commend me to thy friend.
Becket. What friend?
Rosamund. The King.
Becket. Herbert, take out a score of armed men
To guard this bird of passage to her cage;
And watch Fitzurse, and if he follow thee,
Make him thy prisoner. I am Chancellor yet.
[*Exeunt* Herbert *and* Rosamund.
Poor soul! poor soul!
My friend, the King! . . . O thou Great Seal of England,
Given me by my dear friend the King of England—
We long have wrought together, thou and I—
Now must I send thee as a common friend
To tell the King, my friend, I am against him.
We are friends no more: he will say that, not I.
The worldly bond between us is dissolved,
Not yet the love: can I be under him
As Chancellor? as Archbishop over him?
Go therefore like a friend slighted by one
That hath climb'd up to nobler company.
Not slighted—all but moan'd for: thou must go.
I have not dishonor'd thee—I trust I have not;
Not mangled justice. May the hand that next
Inherits thee be but as true to thee
As mine hath been! O, my dear friend, the King!
O brother!—I may come to martyrdom.
I am martyr in myself already.—Herbert!

Herbert (*re-entering*). My lord, the town is quiet, and the moon
Divides the whole long street with light and shade.
No footfall—no Fitzurse. We have seen her home.
Becket. The hog hath tumbled himself into some corner,
Some ditch, to snore away his drunkenness
Into the sober headache,—Nature's moral
Against excess. Let the Great Seal be sent
Back to the King to-morrow.
Herbert. Must that be?
The King may rend the bearer limb from limb.
Think on it again.
Becket. Against the moral excess
No physical ache, but failure it may be
Of all we aim'd at. John of Salisbury
Hath often laid a cold hand on my heats,
And Herbert hath rebuked me even now.
I will be wise and wary, not the soldier
As Foliot swears it.—John, and out of breath!

Enter JOHN OF SALISBURY.

John of Salisbury. Thomas, thou wast not happy taking charge
Of this wild Rosamund to please the King,
Nor am I happy having charge of her—
The included Danaë has escaped again
Her tower, and her Acrisius—where to seek?
I have been about the city.
Becket. Thou wilt find her
Back in her lodging. Go with her—at once—
To-night—my men will guard you to the gates.
Be sweet to her, she has many enemies.

Send the Great Seal by daybreak.
Both, good night!

SCENE II.—STREET IN NORTHAMPTON LEADING TO THE CASTLE.

ELEANOR'S RETAINERS *and* BECKET'S RETAINERS *fighting.* *Enter* ELEANOR *and* BECKET *from opposite streets.*

Eleanor. Peace, fools!
Becket. Peace, friends! what idle brawl is this?
Retainer of Becket. They said—her Grace's people—thou wast found—
Liars! I shame to quote 'em—caught, my lord,
With a wanton in thy lodging—Hell requite 'em!
Retainer of Eleanor. My liege, the Lord Fitzurse reported this
In passing to the Castle even now.
Retainer of Becket. And then they mock'd us and we fell upon 'em,
For we would live and die for thee, my lord,
However kings and queens may frown on thee.
Becket to his Retainers. Go, go—no more of this!
Eleanor to her Retainers. Away!—(*Exeunt* Retainers) Fitzurse——
Becket. Nay, let him be.
Eleanor. No, no, my Lord Archbishop,
'Tis known you are midwinter to all women,
But often in your chancellorship you served
The follies of the King.
Becket. No, not these follies!
Eleanor. My lord, Fitzurse beheld her in your lodging.
Becket. Whom?
Eleanor. Well—you know—the minion, Rosamund.
Becket. He had good eyes!
Eleanor. Then hidden in the street
He watch'd her pass with John of Salisbury
And heard her cry 'Where is this bower of mine?'
Becket. Good ears too!
Eleanor. You are going to the Castle,
Will you subscribe the customs?
Becket. I leave that,
Knowing how much you reverence Holy Church,
My liege, to your conjecture.
Eleanor. I and mine—
And many a baron holds along with me—
Are not so much at feud with Holy Church
But we might take your side against the customs—
So that you grant me one slight favor.
Becket. What?
Eleanor. A sight of that same chart which Henry gave you
With the red line—'her bower.'
Becket. And to what end?
Eleanor. That Church must scorn herself whose fearful Priest
Sits winking at the license of a king,
Altho' we grant when kings are dangerous
The Church must play into the hands of kings;
Look! I would move this wanton from his sight
And take the Church's danger on myself.
Becket. For which she should be duly grateful.
Eleanor. True!
Tho' she that binds the bond, herself should see
That kings are faithful to their marriage vow.
Becket. Ay, Madam, and queens also.
Eleanor. And queens also!
What is your drift?
Becket. My drift is to the Castle,
Where I shall meet the Barons and my King. [*Exit.*

DE BROC, DE TRACY, DE BRITO, DE MORVILLE (*passing*).

Eleanor. To the Castle?
De Broc. Ay!
Eleanor. Stir up the King, the Lords!
Set all on fire against him!
De Brito. Ay, good Madam! [*Exeunt.*
Eleanor. Fool! I will make thee hateful to thy King.
Churl! I will have thee frighted into France,
And I shall live to trample on thy grave.

SCENE III.—THE HALL IN NORTHAMPTON CASTLE.

On one side of the stage the doors of an inner Council-chamber, half-open. At the bottom, the great doors of the Hall. ROGER ARCHBISHOP OF YORK, FOLIOT BISHOP OF LONDON, HILARY OF CHICHESTER, BISHOP OF HEREFORD, RICHARD DE HASTINGS (*Grand Prior of Templars*), PHILIP DE ELEEMOSYNA (*The Pope's Almoner*), *and others.* DE BROC, FITZURSE, DE BRITO, DE MORVILLE, DE TRACY, *and other* BARONS *assembled—a table before them.* JOHN OF OXFORD, *President of the Council.*

Enter BECKET *and* HERBERT OF BOSHAM.

Becket. Where is the King?
Roger of York. Gone hawking on the Nene,
His heart so gall'd with thine ingratitude,
He will not see thy face till thou hast sign'd
These ancient laws and customs of the realm.
Thy sending back the Great Seal madden'd him,
He all but pluck'd the bearer's eyes away.
Take heed, lest he destroy thee utterly.
Becket. Then shalt thou step into my place and sign.
Roger of York. Didst thou not promise Henry to obey
These ancient laws and customs of the realm?
Becket. Saving the honor of my order—ay.
Customs, traditions,—clouds that come and go;
The customs of the Church are Peter's rock.
Roger of York. Saving thine order! But King Henry sware
That, saving his King's kingship, he would grant thee
The crown itself. Saving thine order, Thomas,
Is black and white at once, and comes to nought.
O bolster'd up with stubbornness and pride,
Wilt thou destroy the Church in fighting for it,
And bring us all to shame?
Becket. Roger of York,
When I and thou were youths in Theobald's house,
Twice did thy malice and thy calumnies
Exile me from the face of Theobald.
Now I am Canterbury and thou art York.
Roger of York. And is not York the peer of Canterbury?
Did not Great Gregory bid St. Austin here
Found two archbishoprics, London and York?
Becket. What came of that? The first archbishop fled,
And York lay barren for a hundred years.
Why, by this rule, Foliot may claim the pall
For London too.
Foliot. And with good reason too,
For London had a temple and a priest
When Canterbury hardly bore a name.

Becket. The pagan temple of a pagan Rome!
The heathen priesthood of a heathen creed!
Thou goest beyond thyself in petulancy!
Who made thee London? Who, but Canterbury?

John of Oxford. Peace, peace, my lords! these customs are no longer
As Canterbury calls them, wandering clouds,
But by the King's command are written down,
And by the King's command I, John of Oxford,
The President of this Council, read them.

Becket. Read!

John of Oxford (*reads*). 'All causes of advowsons and presentations, whether between laymen or clerics, shall be tried in the King's court.'

Becket. But that I cannot sign: for that would drag
The cleric before the civil judgment-seat,
And on a matter wholly spiritual.

John of Oxford. 'If any cleric be accused of felony, the Church shall not protect him; but he shall answer to the summons of the King's court to be tried therein.'

Becket. And that I cannot sign.
Is not the Church the visible Lord on earth?
Shall hands that do create the Lord be bound
Behind the back like laymen-criminals?
The Lord be judged again by Pilate? No!

John of Oxford. 'When a bishopric falls vacant, the King, till another be appointed, shall receive the revenues thereof.'

Becket. And that I cannot sign: Is the King's treasury
A fit place for the monies of the Church,
That be the patrimony of the poor?

John of Oxford. 'And when the vacancy is to be filled up, the King shall summon the chapter of that church to court, and the election shall be made in the Chapel Royal, with the consent of our lord the King, and by the advice of his Government.'

Becket. And that I cannot sign? for that would make
Our island-Church a schism from Christendom,
And weight down all free choice beneath the throne.

Foliot. And was thine own election so canonical,
Good father?

Becket. If it were not, Gilbert Foliot,
I mean to cross the sea to France, and lay
My crozier in the Holy Father's hands,
And bid him re-create me, Gilbert Foliot.

Foliot. Nay; by another of these customs thou
Wilt not be suffer'd so to cross the seas
Without the license of our lord the King.

Becket. That, too, I cannot sign.

DE BROC, DE BRITO, DE TRACY, FITZURSE, DE MORVILLE, *start up—a clash of swords.*

Sign and obey!

Becket. My lords, is this a combat or a council?
Are ye my masters, or my lord the King?
Ye make this clashing for no love o' the customs
Or constitutions, or whate'er ye call them,
But that there be among you those that hold
Lands reft from Canterbury.

De Broc. And mean to keep them,
In spite of thee!

Lords (*shouting*). Sign, and obey the crown!

Becket. The crown? Shall I do less for Canterbury
Than Henry for the crown? King Stephen gave
Many of the crown lands to those that helpt him;
So did Matilda, the King's mother. Mark,
When Henry came into his own again,
Then he took back not only Stephen's gifts,
But his own mother's, lest the crown should be
Shorn of ancestral splendor. This did Henry.
Shall I do less for mine own Canterbury?
And thou, De Broc, that holdest Saltwood Castle——
De Broc. And mean to hold it, or——
Becket. To have my life.
De Broc. The King is quick to anger; if thou anger him,
We wait but the King's word to strike thee dead.
Becket. Strike, and I die the death of martyrdom;
Strike, and ye set these customs by my death
Ringing their own death-knell thro' all the realm.
Herbert. And I can tell you, lords, ye are all as like
To lodge a fear in Thomas Becket's heart
As find a hare's form in a lion's cave.
John of Oxford. Ay, sheathe your swords, ye will displease the King.
De Broc. Why down then thou! but an he come to Saltwood,
By God's death, thou shalt stick him like a calf!
[*Sheathing his sword.*
Hilary. O my good lord, I do entreat thee—sign.
Save the King's honor here before his barons.
He hath sworn that thou shouldst sign, and now but shuns
The semblance of defeat; I have heard him say
He means no more; so if thou sign, my lord,
That were but as the shadow of an assent.
Becket. 'Twould seem too like the substance, if I sign'd.
Philip de Eleemosyna. My lord, thine ear! I have the ear of the Pope.
As thou hast honor for the Pope our master,
Have pity on him, sorely prest upon
By the fierce Emperor and his Anti-pope.
Thou knowest he was forced to fly to France;
He pray'd me to pray thee to pacify
Thy King; for if thou go against thy King,
Then must he likewise go against thy King,
And then thy King might join the Anti-pope,
And that would shake the Papacy as it stands.
Besides, thy King swore to our cardinals
He meant no harm nor damage to the Church.
Smoothe thou his pride—thy signing is but form;
Nay, and should harm come of it, it is the Pope
Will be to blame—not thou. Over and over
He told me thou shouldst pacify the King,
Lest there be battle between Heaven and Earth,
And Earth should get the better—for the time.
Cannot the Pope absolve thee if thou sign?
Becket. Have I the orders of the Holy Father?
Philip de Eleemosyna. Orders, my lord—why, no; for what am I?
The secret whisper of the Holy Father.
Thou, that hast been a statesman, couldst thou always

Blurt thy free mind to the air?

Becket. If Rome be feeble, then should I be firm.

Philip. Take it not that way—balk not the Pope's will.

When he hath shaken off the Emperor,
He heads the Church against the King with thee.

Richard de Hastings (*kneeling*). Becket, I am the oldest of the Templars;
I knew thy father; he would be mine age
Had he lived now; think of me as thy father!
Behold thy father kneeling to thee, Becket.
Submit; I promise thee on my salvation
That thou wilt hear no more o' the customs.

Becket. What!
Hath Henry told thee? hast thou talk'd with him?

Another Templar (*kneeling*). Father, I am the youngest of the Templars,
Look on me as I were thy bodily son,
For, like a son, I lift my hands to thee.

Philip. Wilt thou hold out for ever, Thomas Becket?
Dost thou not hear?

Becket (*signs*). Why—there then—there—I sign,
And swear to obey the customs.

Foliot. Is it thy will,
My lord Archbishop, that we too should sign?

Becket. O ay, by that canonical obedience
Thou still hast owed thy father, Gilbert Foliot.

Foliot. Loyally and with good faith, my lord Archbishop?

Becket. O ay, with all that loyalty and good faith
Thou still hast shown thy primate, Gilbert Foliot.

[Becket *draws apart with* Herbert.

Herbert, Herbert, have I betray'd the Church?
I'll have the paper back—blot out my name.

Herbert. Too late, my lord: you see they are signing there.

Becket. False to myself—it is the will of God
To break me, prove me nothing of myself!
This Almoner hath tasted Henry's gold.
The cardinals have finger'd Henry's gold.
And Rome is venal ev'n to rottenness.
I see it, I see it.
I am no soldier, as he said—at least
No leader. Herbert, till I hear from the Pope
I will suspend myself from all my functions.
If fast and prayer, the lacerating scourge——

Foliot (*from the table*). My lord Archbishop, thou hast yet to seal.

Becket. First, Foliot, let me see what I have sign'd. [*Goes to the table.*

What, this! and this!—what! new and old together!
Seal? If a seraph shouted from the sun,
And bad me seal against the rights of the Church,
I would anathematize him. I will not seal. [*Exit with* Herbert.

Enter KING HENRY

Henry. Where's Thomas? hath he sign'd? show me the papers!
Sign'd and not seal'd! How's that?

John of Oxford. He would not seal.

And when he sign'd, his face was stormy-red—
Shame, wrath, I know not what. He sat down there
And dropt it in his hands, and then a paleness,
Like the wan twilight after sunset, crept
Up even to the tonsure, and he groan'd,

'False to myself! It is the will of God!'

Henry. God's will be what it will, the man shall seal,
Or I will seal his doom. My burgher's son—
Nay, if I cannot break him as the prelate,
I'll crush him as the subject. Send for him back.

[*Sits on his throne.*

Barons and bishops of our realm of England,
After the nineteen winters of King Stephen—
A reign which was no reign, when none could sit
By his own hearth in peace; when murder common
As nature's death, like Egypt's plague, had fill'd
All things with blood; when every doorway blush'd,
Dash'd red with that unhallow'd passover;
When every baron ground his blade in blood;
The household dough was kneaded up with blood;
The millwheel turn'd in blood; the wholesome plow
Lay rusting in the furrow's yellow weeds,
Till famine dwarft the race—I came, your King!
Nor dwelt alone, like a soft lord of the East,
In mine own hall, and sucking thro' fools' ears
The flatteries of corruption—went abroad
Thro' all my counties, spied my people's ways;
Yea, heard the churl against the baron—yea,
And did him justice; sat in mine own courts
Judging my judges, that had found a King
Who ranged confusions, made the twilight day,
And struck a shape from out the vague, and law
From madness. And the event—our fallows till'd,
Much corn, repeopled towns, a realm again.
So far my course, albeit not glassy-smooth,
Had prosper'd in the main, but suddenly
Jarr'd on this rock. A cleric violated
The daughter of his host, and murder'd him.
Bishops—York, London, Chichester, Westminster—
Ye haled this tonsured devil into your courts;
But since your canon will not let you take
Life for a life, ye but degraded him
Where I had hang'd him. What doth hard murder care
For degradation? and that made me muse,
Being bounden by my coronation oath
To do men justice. Look to it, your own selves!
Say that a cleric murder'd an archbishop,
What could ye do? Degrade, imprison him—
Not death for death.

John of Oxford. But I, my liege, could swear,
To death for death.

Henry. And, looking thro' my reign,
I found a hundred ghastly murders done
By men, the scum and offal of the Church;
Then, glancing thro' the story of this realm,
I came on certain wholesome usages,
Lost in desuetude, of my grandsire's day,
Good royal customs—had them written fair
For John of Oxford here to read to you.

John of Oxford. And I can easily swear to these as being
The King's will and God's will and justice; yet

I could but read a part to-day, because——
Fitzurse. Because my lord of Canterbury——
De Tracy. Ay,
This Lord of Canterbury——
De Brito. As is his wont
Too much of late whene'er your royal rights
Are mooted in our councils——
Fitzurse. ——made an uproar.
Henry. And Becket had my bosom on all this;
If ever man by bonds of gratefulness——
I raised him from the puddle of the gutter,
I made him porcelain from the clay of the city——
Thought that I knew him, err'd thro' love of him,
Hoped, were he chosen archbishop, Church and Crown,
Two sisters gliding in an equal dance,
Two rivers gently flowing side by side——
But no!
The bird that moults sings the same song again,
The snake that sloughs comes out a snake again.
Snake——ay, but he that lookt a fangless one,
Issues a venomous adder.
For he, when having dofft the Chancellor's robe——
Flung the Great Seal of England in my face——
Claim'd some of our crown lands for Canterbury——
My comrade, boon companion, my co-reveller,
The master of his master, the King's king.——
God's eyes! I had meant to make him all but king.
Chancellor-Archbishop, he might well have sway'd
All England under Henry, the young King,
When I was hence. What did the traitor say?
False to himself, but ten-fold false to me!
The will of God——why, then it is my will——
Is he coming?
Messenger (*entering*). With a crowd of worshippers,
And holds his cross before him thro' the crowd,
As one that puts himself in sanctuary.
Henry. His cross!
Roger of York. His cross! I'll front him, cross to cross.
[*Exit* Roger of York.
Henry. His cross! it is the traitor that imputes
Treachery to his King!
It is not safe for me to look upon him.
Away——with me!
[*Goes in with his* Barons *to the Council-Chamber, the door of which is left open.*

Enter BECKET, *holding his cross of silver before him. The* BISHOPS *come round him.*

Hereford. The King will not abide thee with thy cross.
Permit me, my good lord, to bear it for thee,
Being thy chaplain.
Becket. No: it must protect me.
Herbert. As once he bore the standard of the Angles,
So now he bears the standard of the angels.
Foliot. I am the Dean of the province: let me bear it.
Make not thy King a traitorous murderer.
Becket. Did not your barons draw their swords against me?

Enter ROGER OF YORK, *with his cross, advancing to* BECKET.

Becket. Wherefore dost thou presume to bear thy cross,
Against the solemn ordinance from Rome,
Out of thy province?
Roger of York. Why dost thou presume,

Arm'd with thy cross, to come before the King?
If Canterbury bring his cross to court,
Let York bear his to mate with Canterbury.
Foliot (*seizing hold of* Becket's *cross*). Nay, nay, my lord, thou must not brave the King.
Nay, let me have it. I will have it!
Becket. Away!
[*Flinging him off.*
Foliot. *He* fasts, they say, this mitred Hercules!
He fast! is that an arm of fast? My lord,
Hadst thou not sign'd, I had gone along with thee;
But thou the shepherd hast betray'd the sheep,
And thou art perjured, and thou wilt not seal.
As Chancellor thou wast against the Church,
Now as Archbishop goest against the King;
For, like a fool, thou knowest no middle way.
Ay, ay! but art thou stronger than the King?
Becket. Strong—not in mine own self, but Heaven; true
To either function, holding it; and thou
Fast, scourge thyself, and mortify thy flesh,
Not spirit—thou remainest Gilbert Foliot,
A worldly follower of the worldly strong.
I, bearing this great ensign, make it clear
Under what Prince I fight.
Foliot. My lord of York,
Let us go into the Council, where our bishops
And our great lords will sit in judgment on him.
Becket. Sons sit in judgment on their father!—then
The spire of Holy Church may prick the graves—
Her crypt among the stars. Sign? seal? I promised
The King to obey these customs, not yet written,
Saving mine order; true too, that when written
I sign'd them—being a fool, as Foliot call'd me.
I hold not by my signing. Get ye hence,
Tell what I say to the King.
[*Exeunt* Hereford, Foliot, *and other* Bishops.
Roger of York. The Church will hate thee. [*Exit.*
Becket. Serve my best friend and make him my worst foe;
Fight for the Church, and set the Church against me!
Herbert. To be honest is to set all knaves against thee.
Ah! Thomas, excommunicate them all!
Hereford (*re-entering*). I cannot brook the turmoil thou hast raised.
I would, my lord Thomas of Canterbury,
Thou wert plain Thomas and not Canterbury,
Or that thou wouldst deliver Canterbury
To our King's hands again, and be at peace.
Hilary (*re-entering*). For hath not thine ambition set the Church
This day between the hammer and the anvil—
Fealty to the King, obedience to thyself?
Herbert. What say the bishops?
Hilary. Some have pleaded for him,
But the King rages—most are with the King;
And some are reeds, that one time sway to the current,
And to the wind another. But we hold
Thou art foresworn; and no foresworn Archbishop
Shall helm the Church. We therefore place ourselves
Under the shield and safeguard of the Pope,

And cite thee to appear before the Pope,
And answer thine accusers. . . . Art thou deaf?
Becket. I hear you. [*Clash of arms.*
Hilary. Dost thou hear those others?
Becket. Ay!
Roger of York (*re-entering*). The King's 'God's eyes!' come now so thick and fast,
We fear that we may reave thee of thine own.
Come on, come on! it is not fit for us
To see the proud Archbishop mutilated.
Say that he blind thee and tear out thy tongue.
Becket. So be it. He begins at top with me:
They crucified St. Peter downward.
Roger of York. Nay,
But for their sake who stagger betwixt thine
Appeal, and Henry's anger, yield.
Becket. Hence, Satan! [*Exit* Roger of York.
Fitzurse (*re-entering*). My lord, the King demands three hundred marks,
Due from his castles of Berkhamstead and Eye
When thou thereof wast warden.
Becket. Tell the King
I spent thrice that in fortifying his castles.
De Tracy (*re-entering*). My lord, the King demands seven hundred marks,
Lent at the siege of Thoulouse by the King.
Becket. I led seven hundred knights and fought his wars.
De Brito (*re-entering*). My lord, the King demands five hundred marks,
Advanced thee at his instance by the Jews,
For which the King was bound security.
Becket. I thought it was a gift; I thought it was a gift.

Enter LORD LEICESTER (*followed by* BARONS *and* BISHOPS).

My lord, I come unwillingly. The King
Demands a strict account of all those revenues
From all the vacant sees and abbacies,
Which came into thy hands when Chancellor.
Becket. How much might that amount to, my lord Leicester?
Leicester. Some thirty—forty thousand silver marks.
Becket. Are these your customs? O my good lord Leicester,
The King and I were brothers. All I had
I lavish'd for the glory of the King;
I shone from him, for him, his glory, his
Reflection: now the glory of the Church
Hath swallow'd up the glory of the King;
I am his no more, but hers. Grant me one day
To ponder these demands.
Leicester. Hear first thy sentence!
The King and all his lords——
Becket. Son, first hear *me!*
Leicester. Nay, nay, canst thou, that holdest thine estates
In fee and barony of the King, decline
The judgment of the King?
Becket. The King! I hold
Nothing in fee and barony of the King.
Whatever the Church owns—she holds it in
Free and perpetual alms, unsubject to
One earthly sceptre.
Leicester. Nay, but hear thy judgment.
The King and all his barons——
Becket. Judgment! Barons!
Who but the bridegroom dares to judge the bride.
Or he the bridegroom may appoint? Not he

That is not of the house, but from the street
Stain'd with the mire thereof.
I had been so true
To Henry and mine office that the King
Would throne me in the great Archbishopric:
And I, that knew mine own infirmity,
For the King's pleasure rather than God's cause
Took it upon me—err'd thro' love of him.
Now therefore God from me withdraws Himself,
And the King too.
What! forty thousand marks!
Why thou, the King, the Pope, the Saints, the world,
Know that when made Archbishop I was freed,
Before the Prince and chief Justiciary,
From every bond and debt and obligation
Incurr'd as Chancellor.
Hear me, son.
As gold
Outvalues dross, light darkness, Abel Cain,
The soul the body, and the Church the Throne,
I charge thee, upon pain of mine anathema,
That thou obey, not me, but God in me,
Rather than Henry. I refuse to stand
By the King's censure, make my cry to the Pope,
By whom I will be judged; refer myself,
The King, these customs, all the Church, to him,
And under his authority—I depart.
[*Going.*

[Leicester *looks at him doubtingly.*

Am I a prisoner?

Leicester. By St. Lazarus, no! I am confounded by thee. Go in peace.

De Broc. In peace now—but after. Take that for earnest.

[*Flings a bone at him from the rushes.*

De Brito, Fitzurse, De Tracy, and others (*flinging wisps of rushes*). Ay, go in peace, caitiff, caitiff! And that too, perjured prelate—and that, turncoat shaveling! There, there, there! traitor, traitor, traitor!

Becket. Mannerless wolves!

[*Turning and facing them.*

Herbert. Enough, my lord, enough!

Becket. Barons of England and of Normandy,
When what ye shake at doth but seem to fly,
True test of coward, ye follow with a yell.
But I that threw the mightiest knight of France,
Sir Engelram de Trie,——

Herbert. Enough, my lord.

Becket. More than enough. I play the fool again.

Enter HERALD.

Herald. The King commands you, upon pain of death,
That none should wrong or injure your Archbishop.

Foliot. Deal gently with the young man Absalom.

[*Great doors of the Hall at the back open, and discover a crowd. They shout:*

Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord!

SCENE IV.—REFECTORY OF THE MONASTERY AT NORTHAMPTON.

A banquet on the Tables.

Enter BECKET. BECKET'S RETAINERS.

1st Retainer. Do thou speak first.

2nd Retainer. Nay, thou! Nay, thou! Hast not thou drawn the short straw?

1st Retainer. My lord Archbishop, wilt thou permit us——

Becket. To speak without stammering and like a free man? Ay.

1*st Retainer.* My lord, permit us then to leave thy service.

Becket When?

1*st Retainer.* Now.

Becket. To-night?

1*st Retainer.* To-night, my lord.

Becket. And why?

1*st Retainer.* My lord, we leave thee not without tears.

Becket. Tears? Why not stay with me then?

1*st Retainer.* My lord, we cannot yield thee an answer altogether to thy satisfaction.

Becket. I warrant you, or your own either. Shall I find you one? The King hath frowned upon me.

1*st Retainer.* That is not altogether our answer, my lord.

Becket. No; yet all but all. Go, go! Ye have eaten of my dish and drunken of my cup for a dozen years.

1*st Retainer.* And so we have. We mean thee no wrong. Wilt thou not say, 'God bless you,' ere we go?

Becket. God bless you all! God redden your pale blood! But mine is human-red; and when ye shall hear it is poured out upon earth, and see it mounting to Heaven, my God bless you, that seems sweet to you now, will blast and blind you like a curse.

1*st Retainer.* We hope not, my lord. Our humblest thanks for your blessing. Farewell!

[*Exeunt* Retainers.

Becket. Farewell, friends! farewell, swallows! I wrong the bird; she leaves only the nest she built, they leave the builder. Why? Am I to be murdered to-night?

[*Knocking at the door.*

Attendant. Here is a missive left at the gate by one from the castle.

Becket. Cornwall's hand or Leicester's: tney write marvellously alike.

[*Reading.*

'Fly at once to France, to King Louis of France: there be those about our King who would have thy blood.'

Was not my lord of Leicester bidden to our supper?

Attendant. Ay, my lord, and divers other earls and barons. But the hour is past, and our brother, Master Cook, he makes moan that all be a-getting cold.

Becket. And I make my moan along with him. Cold after warm, winter after summer, and the golden leaves, these earls and barons, that clung to me, frosted off me by the first cold frown of the King. Cold, but look how the table steams, like a heathen altar; nay, like the altar at Jerusalem. Shall God's good gifts be wasted? None of them here! Call in the poor from the streets, and let them feast.

Herbert. That is the parable of our blessed Lord.

Becket. And why should not the parable of our blessed Lord be acted again? Call in the poor! The Church is ever at variance with the kings, and ever at one with the poor. I marked a group of lazars in the marketplace—half-rag, half-sore—beggars, poor rogues (Heaven bless 'em) who never saw nor dreamed of such a banquet. I will amaze them. Call them in, I say. They shall henceforward be my earls and barons—our lords and masters in Christ Jesus.

[*Exit* Herbert.

If the King hold his purpose, I am myself a beggar. Forty thousand marks! forty thousand devils—and these craven bishops!

A Poor Man (*entering*) *with his dog.*

My lord Archbishop, may I come in with my poor friend, my dog? The King's verdurer caught him a-hunting in the forest, and cut off his paws. The dog followed his calling, my lord. I ha' carried him ever so many miles in my arms, and he licks my face and moans and cries out against the King.

Becket. Better thy dog than thee. The King's courts would use thee worse than thy dog—they are too

"PASSIONLESS, PALE, COLD FACE."—*Page 156.*

bloody. Were the Church king, it would be otherwise. Poor beast! poor beast! set him down. I will bind up his wounds with my napkin. Give him a bone, give him a bone! Who misuses a dog would misuse a child—they cannot speak for themselves. Past help! his paws are past help. God help him!

Enter the BEGGARS (*and seat themselves at the Tables*). BECKET *and* HERBERT *wait upon them.*

1st Beggar. Swine, sheep, ox—here's a French supper. When thieves fall out, honest men——

2nd Beggar. Is the Archbishop a thief who gives thee thy supper?

1st Beggar. Well, then, how does it go? When honest men fall out, thieves—no, it can't be that.

2nd Beggar. Who stole the widow's one sitting hen o' Sunday, when she was at mass?

1st Beggar. Come, come! thou hadst thy share on her. Sitting hen! Our Lord Becket's our great sitting-hen cock, and we shouldn't ha' been sitting here if the barons and bishops hadn't been a-sitting on the Archbishop.

Becket. Ay, the princes sat in judgment against me, and the Lord hath prepared your table—*Sederunt principes, ederunt pauperes.*

A Voice. Becket, beware of the knife!

Becket. Who spoke?

3rd Beggar. Nobody, my lord. What's that, my lord?

Becket. Venison.

3rd Beggar. Venison?

Becket. Buck; deer, as you call it.

3rd Beggar. King's meat! By the Lord, won't we pray for your lordship!

Becket. And, my children, your prayers will do more for me in the day of peril that dawns darkly and drearily over the house of God—yea, and in the day of judgment also, than the swords of the craven sycophants would have done had they remained true to me whose bread they have partaken. I must leave you to your banquet. Feed, feast, and be merry. Herbert, for the sake of the Church itself, if not for my own, I must fly to France to-night. Come with me.

[*Exit with* Herbert.

3rd Beggar. Here—all of you—my lord's health (*they drink*). Well—if that isn't goodly wine——

1st Beggar. Then there isn't a goodly wench to serve him with it: they were fighting for her to-day in the street.

3rd Beggar. Peace!

1st Beggar. The black sheep baaed
to the miller's ewe-lamb,
The miller's away for to-night.
Black sheep, quoth she, too black a
sin for me.

And what said the black sheep, my masters?

We can make a black sin white.

3rd Beggar. Peace!

1st Beggar. 'Ewe lamb, ewe lamb,
I am here by the dam.'
But the miller came home that
night,
And so dusted his back with the meal
in his sack,
That he made the black sheep
white.

3rd Beggar. Be we not of the family? be we not a-supping with the head of the family? be we not in my lord's own refractory? Out from among us; thou art our black sheep.

Enter the four KNIGHTS.

Fitzurse. Sheep, said he? And sheep without the shepherd, too. Where is my lord Archbishop? Thou the lustiest and lousiest of this Cain's brotherhood, answer.

3rd Beggar. With Cain's answer, my lord. Am I his keeper? Thou shouldst call him Cain, not me.

Fitzurse. So I do, for he would murder his brother the State.

3rd Beggar (*rising and advancing*). No, my lord; but because the Lord

hath set his mark upon him that no man should murder him.

Fitzurse. Where is he? where is he?

3rd Beggar. With Cain belike, in the land of Nod, or in the land of France for aught I know.

Fitzurse. France! Ha! De Morville, Tracy, Brito—fled is he? Cross swords all of you! swear to follow him! Remember the Queen!

[*The four* Knights *cross their swords.*

De Brito. They mock us; he is here.

[*All the* Beggars *rise and advance upon them.*

Fitzurse. Come, you filthy knaves, let us pass.

3rd Beggar. Nay, my lord, let *us* pass. We be a-going home after our supper in all humbleness, my lord; for the Archbishop loves humbleness, my lord; and though we be fifty to four, we daren't fight you with our crutches, my lord. There now, if thou hast not laid hands upon me! and my fellows know that I am all one scale like a fish. I pray God I haven't given thee my leprosy, my lord.

[Fitzurse *shrinks from him and another presses upon* De Brito.

De Brito. Away, dog!

4th Beggar. And I was bit by a mad dog o' Friday, an' I be half dog already by this token, that tho' I can drink wine I cannot bide water, my lord; and I want to bite, I want to bite, and they do say the very breath catches.

De Brito. Insolent clown. Shall I smite him with the edge of the sword?

De Morville. No, nor with the flat of it either. Smite the shepherd and the sheep are scattered. Smite the sheep and the shepherd will excommunicate thee.

De Brito. Yet my fingers itch to beat him into nothing.

5th Beggar. So do mine, my lord. I was born with it, and sulphur won't bring it out o' me. But for all that the Archbishop washed my feet o' Tuesday. He likes it, my lord.

6th Beggar. And see here, my lord, this rag fro' the gangrene i' my leg. It's humbling—it smells o' human natur'. Wilt thou smell it, my lord? for the Archbishop likes the smell on it, my lord; for I be his lord and master i' Christ, my lord.

De Morville. Faugh! we shall all be poisoned. Let us go.

[*They draw back,* Beggars *following.*

7th Beggar. My lord, I ha' three sisters a-dying at home o' the sweating sickness. They be dead while I be a-supping.

8th Beggar. And I ha' nine darters i' the spital that be dead ten times o'er i' one day wi' the putrid fever; and I bring the taint on it along wi' me, for the Archbishop likes it, my lord.

[*Pressing upon the* Knights *till they disappear thro' the door.*

3rd Beggar. Crutches, and itches, and leprosies, and ulcers, and gangrenes, and running sores, praise ye the Lord, for to-night ye have saved our Archbishop!

1st Beggar. I'll go back again. I hain't half done yet.

Herbert of Bosham (*entering*). My friends, the Archbishop bids you good night. He hath retired to rest, and being in great jeopardy of his life, he hath made his bed between the altars, from whence he sends me to bid you this night pray for him who hath fed you in the wilderness.

3rd Beggar. So we will—so we will, I warrant thee. Becket shall be king, and the Holy Father shall be king, and the world shall live by the King's venison and the bread o' the Lord, and there shall be no more poor for ever. Hurrah! Vive le Roy! That's the English of it.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—Rosamund's Bower.

A Garden of Flowers. In the midst a bank of wild flowers with a bench before it.

Voices heard singing among the trees.

Duet.

1. Is it the wind of the dawn that I hear in the pine overhead?
2. No; but the voice of the deep as it hollows the cliffs of the land.
1. Is there a voice coming up with the voice of the deep from the strand,
One coming up with a song in the flush of the glimmering red?
2. Love that is born of the deep coming up with the sun from the sea.
1. Love that can shape or can shatter a life till the life shall have fled?
2. Nay, let us welcome him, Love that can lift up a life from the dead.
1. Keep him away from the lone little isle. Let us be, let us be.
2. Nay, let him make it his own, let him reign in it—he, it is he,
Love that is born of the deep coming up with the sun from the sea.

Enter HENRY *and* ROSAMUND.

Rosamund. Be friends with him again—I do beseech thee.
Henry. With Becket? I have but one hour with thee—
Sceptre and crozier clashing, and the mitre
Grappling the crown—and when I flee from this
For a gasp of freer air, a breathing-while
To rest upon thy bosom and forget him—
Why thou, my bird, thou pipest Becket, Becket—
Yea, thou my golden dream of Love's own bower,
Must be the nightmare breaking on my peace
With 'Becket.'
Rosamund. O my life's life, not to smile
Is all but death to me. My sun, no cloud!
Let there not be one frown in this one hour.
Out of the many thine, let this be mine!
Look rather thou all-royal as when first
I met thee.
Henry. Where was that?
Rosamund. Forgetting that
Forgets me too.
Henry. Nay, I remember it well.
There on the moors.
Rosamund. And in a narrow path.
A plover flew before thee. Then I saw
Thy high black steed among the flaming furze,
Like sudden night in the main glare of day.
And from that height something was said to me
I knew not what.
Henry. I ask'd the way.
Rosamund. I think so.
So I lost mine.
Henry. Thou wast too shamed to answer.
Rosamund. Too scared—so young!
Henry. The rosebud of my rose!—
Well, well, no more of *him*—I have sent his folk,
His kin, all his belongings, overseas;
Age, orphans, and babe-breasting mothers—all
By hundreds to him—there to beg, starve, die—
So that the fool King Louis feed them not.
The man shall feel that I can strike him yet.
Rosamund. Babes, orphans, mothers! is that royal, Sire?
Henry. And I have been as royal with the Church.
He shelter'd in the Abbey of Pontigny.
There wore his time studying the canon law
To work it against me. But since he cursed
My friends at Veselay, I have let them know,

That if they keep him longer as their guest,
I scatter all their cowls to all the hells.
Rosamund. And is that altogether royal?
Henry. Traitress!
Rosamund. A faithful traitress to thy royal fame.
Henry. Fame! what care I for fame? Spite, ignorance, envy,
Yea, honesty too, paint her what way they will.
Fame of to-day is infamy to-morrow;
Infamy of to-day is fame to-morrow;
And round and round again. What matters? Royal—
I mean to leave the royalty of my crown
Unlessen'd to mine heirs.
Rosamund. Still—thy fame too:
I say that should be royal.
Henry. And I say,
I care not for thy saying.
Rosamund. And I say,
I care not for *thy* saying. A greater King
Than thou art, Love, who cares not for the word,
Makes 'care not'—care. There have I spoken true?
Henry. Care dwell with me for ever, when I cease
To care for thee as ever!
Rosamund. No need! no need! . .
There is a bench. Come, wilt thou sit? . . . My bank
Of wild-flowers [*he sits*]. At thy feet!
[*She sits at his feet.*
Henry. I had them clear
A royal pleasaunce for thee, in the wood,
Not leave these countryfolk at court.
Rosamund. I brought them
In from the wood, and set them here. I love them
More than the garden flowers, that seem at most
Sweet guests, or foreign cousins, not half speaking
The language of the land. I love *them* too,
Yes. But, my liege, I am sure, of all the roses—
Shame fall on those who gave it a dog's name—
This wild one (*picking a briar-rose*)—nay, I shall not prick myself—
Is sweetest. Do but smell!
Henry. Thou rose of the world!
Thou rose of all the roses! [*Muttering.*
I am not worthy of her—this beast-body
That God has plunged my soul in—I, that taking
The Fiend's advantage of a throne, so long
Have wander'd among women,—a foul stream
Thro' fever-breeding levels,—at her side,
Among these happy dales, run clearer, drop
The mud I carried, like yon brook, and glass
The faithful face of heaven—
[*Looking at her, and unconsciously aloud,* —thine! thine!
Rosamund. I know it
Henry (*muttering*). Not hers. We have but one bond, her hate of Becket.
Rosamund (*half hearing*). Nay! nay! what art thou muttering? *I* hate Becket?
Henry (*muttering*). A sane and natural loathing for a soul
Purer, and truer and nobler than herself;
And mine a bitterer illegitimate hate,
A bastard hate born of a former love
Rosamund. My fault to name him! O let the hand of one
To whom thy voice is all her music, stay it
But for a breath.
[*Puts her hand before his lips.*
Speak only of thy love.
Why there—like some loud beggar at thy gate—
The happy boldness of this hand hath won it

Love's alms, thy kiss (*looking at her hand*)—Sacred! I'll kiss it too.
[*Kissing it.*
There! wherefore dost thou so peruse it? Nay,
There may be crosses in my line of life.
Henry. Not half *her* hand—no hand to mate with *her*,
If it should come to that.
Rosamund. With her? with whom?
Henry. Life on the hand is naked gypsy-stuff;
Life on the face, the brows—clear innocence!
Vein'd marble—not a furrow yet—and hers [*Muttering.*
Crost and recrost, a venomous spider's web——
Rosamund (*springing up*). Out of the cloud, my Sun—out of the eclipse
Narrowing my golden hour!
Henry. O Rosamund,
I would be true—would tell thee all—and something
I had to say—I love thee none the less—
Which will so vex thee.
Rosamund. Something against *me?*
Henry. No, no, against myself.
Rosamund. I will not hear it.
Come, come, mine hour! I bargain for mine hour.
I'll call thee little Geoffrey.
Henry. Call him!
Rosamund. Geoffrey!

Enter GEOFFREY.

Henry. How the boy grows!
Rosamund. Ay, and his brows are thine;
The mouth is only Clifford, my dear father.
Geoffrey. My liege, what hast thou brought me?
Henry. Venal imp!
What say'st thou to the Chancellorship of England?
Geoffrey. O yes, my liege.
Henry. 'O yes, my liege!' He speaks
As if it were a cake of gingerbread.
Dost thou know, my boy, what it is to be Chancellor of England?
Geoffrey. Something good, or thou wouldst not give it me.
Henry. It is, my boy, to side with the king when Chancellor, and then to be made Archbishop and go against the King who made him, and turn the world upside down.
Geoffrey. I won't have it then. Nay, but give it me, and I promise thee not to turn the world upside down.
Henry (*giving him a ball*). Here is a ball, my boy, thy world, to turn anyway and play with as thou wilt—which is more than I can do with mine. Go try it, play. [*Exit* Geoffrey.
A pretty lusty boy.
Rosamund. So like to thee:
Like to be liker.
Henry. Not in my chin, I hope!
That threatens double.
Rosamund. Thou art manlike perfect.
Henry. Ay, ay, no doubt; and were I humpt behind,
Thou'dst say as much—the goodly way of women
Who love, for which I love them. May God grant
No ill befall or him or thee when I Am gone.
Rosamund. Is *he* thy enemy.
Henry. He? who? ay!
Rosamund. Thine enemy knows the secret of my bower.
Henry. And I could tear him asunder with wild horses
Before he would betray it. Nay—no fear!
More like is he to excommunicate me.
Rosamund. And I would creep, crawl over knife-edge flint
Barefoot, a hundred leagues, to stay his hand
Before he flash'd the bolt.
Henry. And when he flash'd it
Shrink from me, like a daughter of the Church.
Rosamund. Ay, but he will not.

Henry. Ay! but if he did?
Rosamund. O then! O then! I almost fear to say
That my poor heretic heart would excommunicate
His excommunication, clinging to thee
Closer than ever.
Henry (*raising* Rosamund *and kissing her*). My brave-hearted Rose!
Hath he ever been to see thee?
Rosamand. Here? not he.
And it is so lonely here—no confessor.
Henry. Thou shalt confess all thy sweet sins to me.
Rosamund. Besides, we came away in such a heat,
I brought not ev'n my crucifix.
Henry. Take this.
[*Giving her the Crucifix which* Eleanor *gave him.*
Rosamund. O beautiful! May I have it as mine, till mine
Be mine again?
Henry (*throwing it round her neck*). Thine—as I am—till death!
Rosamund. Death? no! I'll have it with me in my shroud,
And wake with it, and show it to all the Saints.
Henry. Nay—I must go; but when thou layest thy lip
To this, remembering One who died for thee,
Remember also one who lives for thee
Out there in France; for I must hence to brave
The Pope, King Louis, and this turbulent priest.
Rosamund (*kneeling*). O by thy love for me, all mine for thee,
Fling not thy soul into the flames of hell:
I kneel to thee—be friends with him again.
Henry. Look, look! if little Geoffrey have not tost
His ball into the brook! makes after it too
To find it. Why, the child will drown himself.

Rosamund. Geoffrey! Geoffrey!
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—MONTMIRAIL.

'*The Meeting of the Kings.*' JOHN OF OXFORD *and* HENRY. *Crowd in the distance.*

John of Oxford. You have not crown'd young Henry yet, my liege?
Henry. Crown'd! by God's eyes, we will not have him crown'd.
I spoke of late to the boy, he answer'd me,
As if he wore the crown already—No,
We will not have him crown'd.
'Tis true what Becket told me, that the mother
Would make him play his kingship against mine.
John of Oxford. Not have him crown'd?
Henry. Not now—not yet! and Becket—
Becket should crown him were he crown'd at all:
But, since we would be lord of our own manor,
This Canterbury, like a wounded deer,
Has fled our presence and our feeding-grounds.
John of Oxford. Cannot a smooth tongue lick him whole again
To serve your will?
Henry. He hates my will, not me.
John of Oxford. There's York, my liege.
Henry. But England scarce would hold
Young Henry king, if only crown'd by York,
And that would stilt up York to twice himself.
There is a movement yonder in the crowd—
See if our pious—what shall I call him, John?—
Husband-in-law, our smooth-shorn suzerain,

Be yet within the field.
John of Oxford. I will. [*Exit.*
Henry. Ay! Ay!
Mince and go back! his politic Holiness
Hath all but climb'd the Roman perch again,
And we shall hear him presently with clapt wing
Crow over Barbarossa—at last tongue-free
To blast my realms with excommunication
And interdict. I must patch up a peace—
A piece in this long-tugged-at, thread-bare-worn
Quarrel of Crown and Church—to rend again.
His Holiness cannot steer straight thro' shoals,
Nor I. The citizen's heir hath conquer'd me
For the moment. So we make our peace with him.

Enter LOUIS.

Brother of France, what shall be done with Becket?
Louis. The holy Thomas! Brother, you have traffick'd
Between the Emperor and the Pope, between
The Pope and Antipope—a perilous game
For men to play with God.
Henry. Ay, ay, good brother,
They call you the Monk-King.
Louis. Who calls me? she
That was my wife, now yours? You have her Duchy,
The point you aim'd at, and pray God she prove
True wife to you. You have had the better of us
In secular matters.
Henry. Come, confess, good brother,
You did your best or worst to keep her Duchy.
Only the golden Leopard printed in it
Such hold-fast claws that you perforce again
Shrank into France. Tut, tut! did we convene
This conference but to babble of our wives?
They are plagues enough in-door.
Louis. We fought in the East,
And felt the sun of Antioch scald our mail,
And push'd our lances into Saracen hearts.
We never hounded on the State at home
To spoil the Church.
Henry. How should you see this rightly?
Louis. Well, well, no more! I am proud of my 'Monk-King,'
Whoever named me and, brother, Holy Church
May rock, but will not wreck, nor our Archbishop
Stagger on the slope decks for any rough sea
Blown by the breath of kings. We do forgive you
For aught you wrought against us.
[Henry *holds up his hand.*
Nay, I pray you,
Do not defend yourself. You will do much
To rake out all old dying heats, if you,
At my requesting, will but look into
The wrongs you did him, and restore his kin,
Reseat him on his throne of Canterbury,
Be, both, the friends you were.
Henry. The friends we were!
Co-mates we were, and had our sport together,
Co-kings we were, and made the laws together.
The world had never seen the like before.
You afe too cold to know the fashion of it.
Well, well, we will be gentle with him, gracious—
Most gracious.

Enter BECKET, *after him*, JOHN OF OXFORD, ROGER OF YORK, GILBERT FOLIOT, DE BROC, FITZURSE, *etc.*

Only that the rift he made
May close between us, here I am wholly king,
The word should come from him.
Becket (*kneeling*). Then, my dear liege,
I here deliver all this controversy
Into your royal hands.
Henry. Ah, Thomas, Thomas,
Thou art thyself again, Thomas again.
Becket (*rising*). Saving God's honor!
Henry. Out upon thee, man!
Saving the Devil's honor, his yes and no.
Knights, bishops, earls, this London spawn—by Mahound,
I had sooner have been born a Mussulman—
Less clashing with their priests—
I am half-way down the slope—will no man stay me?
I dash myself to pieces—I stay myself—
Puff—it is gone. You, Master Becket, you
That owe to me your power over me—
Nay, nay—
Brother of France, you have taken, cherish'd him
Who thief-like fled from his own church by night,
No man pursuing. I would have had him back.
Take heed he do not turn and rend you too:
For whatsoever may displease him—that
Is clean against God's honor—a shift, a trick
Whereby to challenge, face me out of all
My regal rights. Yet, yet—that none may dream
I go against God's honor—ay, or himself
In any reason, choose
A hundred of the wisest heads from England,
A hundred, too, from Normandy and Anjou:
Let these decide on what was customary
In olden days, and all the Church of France
Decide on their decision, I am content.
More, what the mightiest and the holiest
Of all his predecessors may have done
Ev'n to the least and meanest of my own,
Let him do the same to me—I am content.
Louis. Ay, ay! the King humbles himself enough.
Becket. (*Aside*) Words! he will wriggle out of them like an eel
When the time serves. (*Aloud.*) My lieges and my lords,
The thanks of Holy Church are due to those
That went before us for their work, which we
Inheriting reap an easier harvest. Yet——
Louis. My lord, will you be greater than the Saints,
More than St. Peter? whom——what is it you doubt?
Behold your peace at hand.
Becket. I say that those
Who went before us did not wholly clear
The deadly growths of earth, which Hell's own heat
So dwelt on that they rose and darken'd Heaven.
Yet they did much. Would God they had torn up all
By the hard root, which shoots again; our trial
Had so been less; but, seeing they were men
Defective or excessive, must we follow
All that they overdid or underdid?
Nay, if they were defective as St. Peter

Denying Christ, who yet defied the tyrant,
We hold by his defiance, not his defect.
O good son Louis, do not counsel me,
No, to suppress God's honor for the sake
Of any king that breathes. No, God forbid!
Henry. No! God forbid! and turn me Mussulman!
No God but one, and Mahound is his prophet.
But for your Christian, look you, you shall have
None other God but me—me, Thomas, son
Of Gilbert Becket, London merchant. Out!
I hear no more. [*Exit.*
Louis. Our brother's anger puts him,
Poor man, beside himself—not wise. My lord,
We have claspt your cause, believing that our brother
Had wrong'd you; but this day he proffer'd peace.
You will have war; and tho' we grant the Church
King over this world's kings, yet, my good lord,
We that are kings are something in this world,
And so we pray you, draw yourself from under
The wings of France. We shelter you no more. [*Exit.*
John of Oxford. I am glad that France hath scouted him at last:
I told the Pope what manner of man he was. [*Exit.*
Roger of York. Yea, since he flouts the will of either realm,
Let either cast him away like a dead dog! [*Exit.*
Foliot. Yea, let a stranger spoil his heritage,
And let another take his bishopric! [*Exit.*
De Broc. Our castle, my lord, belongs to Canterbury.
I pray you come and take it. [*Exit.*
Fitzurse. When you will. [*Exit.*
Becket. Cursed be John of Oxford, Roger of York,
And Gilbert Foliot! cursed those De Brocs
That hold our Saltwood Castle from our see!
Cursed Fitzurse, and all the rest of them
That sow this hate between my lord and me!
Voices from the Crowd. Blessed be the Lord Archbishop, who hath withstood two Kings to their faces for the honor of God.
Becket. Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings, praise!
I thank you, sons; when kings but hold by crowns,
The crowd that hungers for a crown in Heaven
Is my true king.
Herbert. Thy true King bad thee be
A fisher of men; thou hast them in thy net.
Becket. I am too like the King here; both of us
Too headlong for our office. Better have been
A fisherman at Bosham, my good Herbert,
Thy birthplace—the sea-creek—the petty rill
That falls into it—the green field—the gray church—
The simple lobster-basket, and the mesh—
The more or less of daily labor done—
The pretty gaping bills in the home-nest
Piping for bread—the daily want supplied—
The daily pleasure to supply it.
Herbert. Ah, Thomas,
You had not borne it, no, not for a day.
Becket. Well, maybe, no,
Herbert. But bear with Walter Map,
For here he comes to comment on the time.

Enter WALTER MAP.

Walter Map. Pity, my lord, that you have quenched the warmth of France toward you, tho' His Holiness, after much smouldering and smoking, be kindled again upon your quarter.

Becket. Ay, if he do not end in smoke again.

Walter Map. My lord, the fire, when first kindled, said to the smoke, 'Go up, my son, straight to Heaven.' And the smoke said, 'I go;' but anon the North-east took and turned him South-west, then the South-west turned him North-east, and so of the other winds; but it was in him to go up straight if the time had been quieter. Your lordship affects the unwavering perpendicular; but His Holiness, pushed one way by the Empire and another by England, if he move at all, Heaven stay him, is fain to diagonalize.

Herbert. Diagonalize! thou art a word-monger.
Our Thomas never will diagonalize.
Thou art a jester and a verse-maker.
Diagonalize!

Walter Map. Is the world any the worse for my verses if the Latin rhymes be rolled out from a full mouth? or any harm done to the people if my jest be in defence of the Truth?

Becket. Ay, if the jest be so done that the people
Delight to wallow in the grossness of it,
Till Truth herself be shamed of her defender.

Non defensoribus istis, Walter Map.

Walter Map. Is that my case? so if the city be sick, and I cannot call the kennel sweet, your lordship would suspend me from verse-writing, as you suspended yourself after sub-writing to the customs.

Becket. I pray God pardon mine infirmity.

Walter Map. Nay, my lord, take heart; for tho' you suspended yourself, the Pope let you down again; and tho' you suspend Foliot or another, the Pope will not leave them in suspense, for the Pope himself is always in suspense, like Mahound's coffin hung between heaven and earth—always in suspense, like the scales, till the weight of Germany or the gold of England brings one of them down to the dust—always in suspense, like the tail of the horologe—to and fro—tick-tack—we make the time, we keep the time, ay, and we serve the time; for I have heard say that if you boxed the Pope's ears with a purse, you might stagger him, but he would pocket the purse. No saying of mine—Jocelyn of Salisbury. But the King hath bought half the College of Redhats. He warmed to you to-day, and you have chilled him again. Yet you both love God. Agree with him quickly again, even for the sake of the Church. My one grain of good counsel which you will not swallow. I hate a split between old friendships as I hate the dirty gap in the face of a Cistercian monk, that will swallow anything. Farewell, [*Exit.*

Becket. Map scoffs at Rome. I all but hold with Map.
Save for myself no Rome were left in England,
All had been his. Why should this Rome, this Rome,
Still choose Barabbas rather than the Christ,
Absolve the left-hand thief and damn the right?
Take fees of tyranny, wink at sacrilege,
Which even Peter had not dared? condemn
The blameless exile?—

Herbert. Thee, thou holy Thomas!
I would that thou hadst been the Holy Father.

Becket. I would have done my most to keep Rome holy,
I would have made Rome know she still is Rome—
Who stands aghast at her eternal self
And shakes at mortal kings—her vacillation,

Avarice, craft—O God, how many an innocent
Has left his bones upon the way to Rome
Unwept, uncared for. Yea—on mine own self
The King had had no power except for Rome.
'Tis not the King who is guilty of mine exile,
But Rome, Rome, Rome!

Herbert. My Lord, I see this Louis
Returning, ah! to drive thee from his realm.

Becket. He said as much before. Thou art no prophet,
Nor yet a prophet's son.

Herbert. Whatever he say,
Deny not thou God's honor for a king.
The King looks troubled.

Re-enter KING LOUIS.

Louis. My dear lord Archbishop,
I learn but now that those poor Poitevins,
That in thy cause were stirr'd against King Henry,
Have been, despite his kingly promise given
To our own self of pardon, evilly used
And put to pain. I have lost all trust in him.
The Church alone hath eyes—and now I see
That I was blind—suffer the phrase—surrendering
God's honor to the pleasure of a man.
Forgive me and absolve me, holy father. [*Kneels.*

Becket. Son, I absolve thee in the name of God.

Louis (*rising*). Return to Sens, where we will care for you.
The wine and wealth of all our France are yours;
Rest in our realm, and be at peace with all. [*Exeunt.*

Voices from the Crowd. Long live the good King Louis! God bless the great Archbishop!

Re-enter HENRY *and* JOHN OF OXFORD.

Henry (*looking after* King Louis *and* Becket). Ay, there they go—both backs are turn'd to me—
Why then I strike into my former path
For England, crown young Henry there, and make
Our waning Eleanor all but love me! John,
Thou hast served me heretofore with Rome—and well.
They call thee John the Swearer.

John of Oxford. For this reason,
That, being ever duteous to the King,
I evermore have sworn upon his side,
And ever mean to do it.

Henry (*claps him on the shoulder*). Honest John!
To Rome again! the storm begins again.
Spare not thy tongue! be lavish with our coins,
Threaten our junction with the Emperor—flatter
And fright the Pope—bribe all the Cardinals—leave
Lateran and Vatican in one dust of gold—
Swear and unswear, state and misstate thy best!
I go to have young Henry crown'd by York.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—THE BOWER.

HENRY *and* ROSAMUND.

Henry. All that you say is just. I cannot answer it
Till better times, when I shall put away——

Rosamund. What will you put away?

Henry. That which you ask me
Till better times. Let it content you now
There is no woman that I love so well.

Rosamund. No woman but should be content with that—
Henry. And one fair child to fondle!
Rosamund. O yes, the child
We waited for so long—heaven's gift at last—
And how you doated on him then! To-day
I almost fear'd your kiss was colder —yes—
But then the child *is* such a child. What chance
That he should ever spread into the man
Here in our silence? I have done my best.
I am not learn'd.
Henry. I am the King, his father,
And I will look to it. Is our secret ours?
Have you had any alarm? no stranger?
Rosamund. No.
The warder of the bower hath given himself
Of late to wine. I sometimes think he sleeps
When he should watch; and yet what fear? the people
Believe the wood enchanted. No one comes,
Nor foe nor friend; his fond excess of wine
Springs from the loneliness of my poor bower,
Which weighs even on me.
Henry. Yet these tree-towers,
Their long bird-echoing minster-aisles, —the voice
Of the perpetual brook, these golden slopes
Of Solomon-shaming flowers—that was your saying,
All pleased you so at first.
Rosamund. Not now so much.
My Anjou bower was scarce as beautiful.
But you were oftener there. I have none but you.
The brook's voice is not yours, and no flower, not
The sun himself, should he be changed to one,
Could shine away the darkness of that gap
Left by the lack of love.
Henry. The lack of love!
Rosamund. Of one we love. Nay, I would not be bold,
Yet hoped ere this you might——
[*Looks earnestly at him.*
Henry. Anything further?
Rosamund. Only my best bower-maiden died of late,
And that old priest whom John of Salisbury trusted
Hath sent another.
Henry. Secret?
Rosamund. I but ask'd her
One question, and she primm'd her mouth and put
Her hands together—thus—and said, God help her,
That she was sworn to silence.
Henry. What did you ask her?
Rosamund. Some daily something-nothing.
Henry. Secret, then?
Rosamund. I do not love her. Must you go, my liege,
So suddenly?
Henry. I came to England suddenly,
And on a great occasion sure to wake
As great a wrath in Becket——
Rosamund. Always Becket!
He always comes between us.
Henry. —And to meet it
I needs must leave as suddenly. It is raining,
Put on your hood and see me to the bounds. [*Exeunt.*

Margery (*singing behind scene*).

Babble in bower
Under the rose!
Bee mustn't buzz,
Whoop—but he knows.

Kiss me, little one,
Nobody near!
Grasshopper, grasshopper,
Whoop—you can hear.

Kiss in the bower,
Tit on the tree!
Bird mustn't tell,
Whoop—he can see.

Enter MARGERY.

I ha' been but a week here and I ha' seen what I ha' seen, for to be sure it's no more than a week since our old Father Philip that has confessed our mother for twenty years, and she was hard put to it, and to speak truth, nigh at the end of our last crust, and that mouldy, and she cried out on him to put me forth in the world and to make me a woman of the world, and to win my own bread, whereupon he asked our mother if I could keep a quiet tongue i' my head, and not speak till I was spoke to, and I answered for myself that I never spoke more than was needed, and he told me he would advance me to the service of a great lady, and took me ever so far away, and gave me a great pat o' the cheek for a pretty wench, and said it was a pity to blindfold such eyes as mine, and such to be sure they be, but he blinded 'em for all that, and so brought me no-hows as I may say, and the more shame to him after his promise, into a garden and not into the world, and bad me whatever I saw not to speak one word, an' it 'ud be well for me in the end, for there were great ones who would look after me, and to be sure I ha' seen great ones to-day—and then not to speak one word, for that's the rule o' the garden, tho' to be sure if I had been Eve i' the garden I shouldn't ha' minded the apple, for what's an apple, you know, save to a child, and I'm no child, but more a woman o' the world than my lady here, and I ha' seen what I ha' seen—tho' to be sure if I hadn't minded it we should all on us ha' had to go, bless the Saints, wi' bare backs, but the backs 'ud ha' countenanced one another, and belike it 'ud ha' been always summer, and anyhow I am as well-shaped as my lady here, and I ha' seen what I ha' seen, and what's the good of my talking to myself, for here comes my lady (*enter* Rosamund), and, my lady, tho' I shouldn't speak one word, I wish you joy o' the King's brother.

Rosamund. What is it you mean?

Margery. I mean your goodman, your husband, my lady, for I saw your ladyship a-parting wi' him even now i' the coppice, when I was a-getting o' bluebells for your ladyship's nose to smell on—and I ha' seen the King once at Oxford, and he's as like the King as fingernail to fingernail, and I thought at first it was the King, only you know the King's married, for King Louis——

Rosamund. Married!

Margery. Years and years, my lady, for her husband, King Louis——

Rosamund. Hush!

Margery. —And I thought if it were the King's brother he had a better bride than the King, for the people do say that his is bad beyond all reckoning, and——

Rosamund. The people lie.

Margery. Very like, my lady, but most on 'em know an honest woman and a lady when they see her, and besides they say, she makes songs, and that's against her, for I never knew an honest woman that could make songs, tho' to be sure our mother 'ill sing me old songs by the hour, but then, God help her, she had 'em from her mother, and her mother from her mother back and back for ever so long, but none on 'em ever made songs, and they were all honest.

Rosamund. Go, you shall tell me of her some other time.

Margery. There's none so much to tell on her, my lady, only she kept the seventh commandment better than some I know on, or I couldn't look your ladyship i' the face, and she brew'd the best ale in all Glo'ster, that is to say in her time when she had the 'Crown.'

Rosamund. The crown! who?

Margery. Mother.

Rosamund. I mean her whom you call—fancy—my husband's brother's wife.

Margery. Oh, Queen Eleanor. Yes, my lady; and tho' I be sworn not to speak a word, I can tell you all about her, if——

Rosamund. No word now. I am faint and sleepy. Leave me. Nay—go. What! will you anger me?

[*Exit* Margery.

He charged me not to question any of those
About me. Have I? no! she question'd *me.*
Did she not slander *him?* Should she stay here?
May she not tempt me, being at my side,
To question *her?* Nay, can I send her hence
Without his kingly leave? I am in the dark.
I have lived, poor bird, from cage to cage, and known
Nothing but him—happy to know no more,
So that he loved me—and he loves me—yes,
And bound me by his love to secrecy
Till his own time.
Eleanor, Eleanor, have I
Not heard ill things of her in France?
Oh, she's
The Queen of France. I see it—some confusion,
Some strange mistake. I did not hear aright,
Myself confused with parting from the King.

Margery (*behind scene*). Bee mustn't buzz,
Whoop—but he knows.

Rosamund. Yet her—what her? he hinted of some her—
When he was here before—
Something that would displease me. Hath he stray'd
From love's clear path into the common bush,
And, being scratch'd, returns to his true rose,
Who hath not thorn enough to prick him for it,
Ev'n with a word?

Margery (*behind scene*). Bird mustn't tell,
Whoop—he can see.

Rosamund. I would not hear him. Nay—there's more—he frown'd 'No mate for her, if it should come to that'—
To that—to what?

Margery (*behind scene*). Whoop—but he knows,
Whoop—but he knows.

Rosamund. O God! some dreadful truth is breaking on me—
Some dreadful thing is coming on me.

[*Enter* Geoffrey.

Geoffrey!

Geoffrey. What are you crying for, when the sun shines?

Rosamund. Hath not thy father left us to ourselves?

Geoffrey. Ay, but he's taken the rain with him. I hear Margery: I'll go play with her.

[*Exit* Geoffrey.

Rosamund. Rainbow, stay,
Gleam upon gloom,
Bright as my dream,
Rainbow, stay!
But it passes away,
Gloom upon gleam,
Dark as my doom—
O rainbow stay.

SCENE II.—Outside the Woods near Rosamund's Bower.

Eleanor. Fitzurse.

Eleanor. Up from the salt lips of the land we two
Have track'd the King to this dark inland wood;
And somewhere hereabouts he vanish'd. Here
His turtle builds; his exit is our adit:
Watch! he will out again, and presently,
Seeing he must to Westminster and crown
Young Henry there to-morrow.

Fitzurse. We have watch'd
So long in vain, he hath pass'd out again,
And on the other side.
[*A great horn winded.*
Hark! Madam!
Eleanor. Ay,
How ghostly sounds that horn in the black wood!
[*A countryman flying.*
Whither away, man? what are you flying from?
Countryman. The witch! the witch! she sits naked by a great heap of gold in the middle of the wood, and when the horn sounds she comes out as a wolf. Get you hence! a man passed in there to-day: I holla'd to him, but he didn't hear me: he'll never out again, the witch has got him. I daren't stay—I daren't stay!
Eleanor. Kind of the witch to give thee warning tho'.
[*Man flies.*
Is not this wood-witch of the rustic's fear
Our woodland Circe that hath witch'd the King?
[*Horn sounded. Another flying.*
Fitzurse. Again! stay, fool, and tell me why thou fliest.
Countryman. Fly thou too. The King keeps his forest head of game here, and when that horn sounds, a score of wolf-dogs are let loose that will tear thee piecemeal. Linger not till the third horn. Fly! [*Exit.*
Eleanor. This is the likelier tale. We have hit the place.
Now let the King's fine game look to itself. [*Horn.*
Fitzurse. Again!—
And far on in the dark heart of the wood
I hear the yelping of the hounds of hell.
Eleanor. I have my dagger here to still their throats.
Fitzurse. Nay, Madam, not to-night—the night is falling.
What can be done to-night?
Eleanor. Well—well—away.

SCENE III.—Traitor's Meadow at Fréteval. Pavilions and Tents of the English and French Baronage.

Becket *and* Herbert of Bosham.

Becket. See here!
Herbert. What's here?
Becket. A notice from the priest,
To whom our John of Salisbury committed
The secret of the bower, that our wolf-Queen
Is prowling round the fold. I should be back
In England ev'n for this.
Herbert. These are by-things
In the great cause.
Becket. The by-things of the Lord
Are the wrong'd innocences that will cry
From all the hidden by-ways of the world
In the great day against the wronger. I know
Thy meaning. Perish she, I, all, before
The Church should suffer wrong!
Herbert. Do you see, my lord,
There is the King talking with Walter Map?
Becket. He hath the Pope's last letters, and they threaten
The immediate thunder-blast of interdict:
Yet he can scarce be touching upon those,
Or scarce would smile that fashion.
Herbert. Winter sunshine!
Beware of opening out thy bosom to it,
Lest thou, myself, and all thy flock should catch
An after ague-fit of trembling. Look!
He bows, he bares his head, he is coming hither.
Still with a smile.

Enter King Henry *and* Walter Map.

Henry. We have had so many hours together, Thomas,
So many happy hours alone together,
That I would speak with you once more alone.

Becket. My liege, your will and happiness are mine.

[*Exeunt* King *and* Becket.

Herbert. The same smile still.

Walter Map. Do you see that great black cloud that hath come over the sun and cast us all into shadow?

Herbert. And feel it too.

Walter Map. And see you yon side-beam that is forced from under it, and sets the church-tower over there all a-hell-fire as it were.

Herbert. Ay.

Walter Map. It is this black, bell-silencing, anti-marrying, burial-hindering interdict that hath squeezed out this side-smile upon Canterbury, whereof may come conflagration. Were I Thomas, I wouldn't trust it. Sudden change is a house on sand; and tho' I count Henry honest enough, yet when fear creeps in at the front, honesty steals out at the back, and the King at last is fairly scared by this cloud—this interdict. I have been more for the King than the Church in this matter—yea, even for the sake of the Church: for, truly, as the case stood, you had safelier have slain an archbishop than a she-goat: but our recoverer and upholder of customs hath in this crowning of young Henry by York and London so violated the immemorial usage of the Church, that, like the gravedigger's child I have heard of, trying to ring the bell, he hath half-hanged himself in the rope of the Church, or rather pulled all the Church with the Holy Father astride of it down upon his own head.

Herbert. Were you there?

Walter Map. In the church rope? —no. I was at the crowning, for I have pleasure in the pleasure of crowds, and to read the faces of men at a great show.

Herbert. And how did Roger of York comport himself?

Walter Map. As magnificently and archiepiscopally as our Thomas would have done: only there was a dare-devil in his eye—I should say a dare-Becket. He thought less of two kings than of one Roger the king of the occasion. Foliot is the holier man, perhaps the better. Once or twice there ran a twitch across his face as who should say what's to follow? but Salisbury was a calf cowed by Mother Church, and every now and then glancing about him like a thief at night when he hears a door open in the house and thinks 'the master.'

Herbert. And the father-king?

Walter Map. The father's eye was so tender it would have called a goose off the green, and once he strove to hide his face, like the Greek king when his daughter was sacrificed, but he thought better of it: it was but the sacrifice of a kingdom to his son, a smaller matter; but as to the young crownling himself, he looked so malapert in the eyes, that had I fathered him I had given him more of the rod than the sceptre. Then followed the thunder of the captains and the shouting, and so we came on to the banquet, from whence there puffed out such an incense of unctuosity into the nostrils of our Gods of Church and State, that Lucullus or Apicius might have sniffed it in their Hades of heathenism, so that the smell of their own roast had not come across it——

Herbert. Map, tho' you make your butt too big, you overshoot it.

Walter Map. —For as to the fish, they de-miracled the miraculous draught, and might have sunk a navy——

Herbert. There again, Goliasing and Goliathising!

Walter Map. —And as for the flesh at table, a whole Peter's sheet, with all manner of game, and four-footed things, and fowls——

"DELICATE-HANDED PRIEST INTONE." —*Page 160*

Herbert. And all manner of creeping things too?

Walter Map. —Well, there were Abbots—but they did not bring their women; and so we were dull enough at first, but in the end we flourished out into a merriment; for the old King would act servitor and hand a dish to his son; whereupon my lord of York —his fine-cut face bowing and beaming with all that courtesy which hath less loyalty in it than the backward scrape of the clown's heel—'great honor,' says he, 'from the King's self to the King's son.' Did you hear the young King's quip?

Herbert. No, what was it?

Walter Map. Glancing at the days when his father was only Earl of Anjou, he answered:—'Should not an earl's son wait on a king's son?' And when the cold corners of the King's mouth began to thaw, there was a great motion of laughter among us, part real, part childlike, to be freed from the dulness—part royal, for King and kingling both laughed, and so we could not but laugh, as by a royal necessity—part childlike again —when we felt we had laughed too long and could not stay ourselves—many midriff-shaken even to tears, as springs gush out after earthquakes—but from those, as I said before, there may come a conflagration—tho', to keep the figure moist and make it hold water, I should say rather, the lacrymation of a lamentation; but look if Thomas have not flung himself at the King's feet. They have made it up again—for the moment.

Herbert. Thanks to the blessed Magdalen, whose day it is.

Re-enter HENRY *and* BECKET. (*During their conference the* BARONS *and* BISHOPS *of* FRANCE *and* ENGLAND *come in at back of stage.*)

Becket. Ay, King! for in thy kingdom, as thou knowest,
The spouse of the Great King, thy King, hath fallen—
The daughter of Zion lies beside the way—
The priests of Baal tread her underfoot—
The golden ornaments are stolen from her——

Henry. Have I not promised to restore her, Thomas,
And send thee back again to Canterbury?

Becket. Send back again those exiles of my kin
Who wander famine-wasted thro' the world.

Henry. Have I not promised, man, to send them back?

Becket. Yet one thing more. Thou hast broken thro' the pales
Of privilege, crowning thy young son by York,
London and Salisbury—not Canterbury.

Henry. York crown'd the Conqueror—not Canterbury.

Becket. There was no Canterbury in William's time.

Henry. But Hereford, you know, crown'd the first Henry.

Becket. But Anselm crown'd this Henry o'er again.

Henry. And thou shalt crown my Henry o'er again.

Becket. And is it then with thy good-will that I
Proceed against thine evil councillors,
And hurl the dread ban of the Church on those
Who made the second mitre play the first,
And acted me?

Henry. Well, well, then—have thy way!
It may be they were evil councillors.
What more, my lord Archbishop? What more, Thomas?
I make thee full amends. Say all thy say,
But blaze not out before the Frenchmen here.

Becket. More? Nothing, so thy promise be thy deed.

Henry (*holding out his hand*). Give me thy hand. My Lords of France and England,
My friend of Canterbury and myself
Are now once more at perfect amity.
Unkingly should I be, and most unknightly,
Not striving still, however much in vain,
To rival him in Christian charity.

Herbert. All praise to Heaven, and sweet St. Magdalen!

Henry. And so farewell until we meet in England.

Becket. I fear, my liege, we may not meet in England

Henry. How, do you make me a traitor?

Becket. No, indeed!
That be far from thee.

Henry. Come, stay with us, then, Before you part for England.

Becket. I am bound
For that one hour to stay with good King Louis,
Who helpt me when none else.

Herbert. He said thy life
Was not one hour's worth in England save
King Henry gave thee first the kiss of peace.

Henry. He said so? Louis, did he? look you, Herbert,
When I was in mine anger with King Louis,
I sware I would not give the kiss of peace,
Not on French ground, nor any ground but English,
Where his cathedral stands. Mine old friend, Thomas,
I would there were that perfect trust between us,
That health of heart, once ours, ere Pope or King
Had come between us! Even now—who knows?—
I might deliver all things to thy hand—
If . . . but I say no more . . . farewell, my lord.

Becket. Farewell, my liege!

[*Exit* Henry, *then the* Barons *and* Bishops.

Walter Map. There again! when the full fruit of the royal promise might have dropt into thy mouth hadst thou but opened it to thank him.

Becket. He fenced his royal promise with an *if*.

Walter Map. And is the King's *if* too high a stile for your lordship to overstep and come at all things in the next field?

Becket. Ay, if this *if* be like the Devil's '*if*
Thou wilt fall down and worship me.'

Herbert. Oh, Thomas,
I could fall down and worship thee, my Thomas,
For thou hast trodden this wine-press alone.

Becket. Nay, of the people there are many with me.

Walter Map. I am not altogether with you, my lord, tho' I am none of those that would raise a storm between you, lest ye should draw together like two ships in a calm. You wrong the King: he meant what he said to-day. Who shall vouch for his to-morrows? One word further. Doth not the *fewness* of anything make the fulness of it in estimation? Is not virtue prized mainly for its rarity and great baseness loathed as an exception: for were all, my lord, as noble as yourself, who would look up to you? and were all as base as—who shall I say—Fitzurse and his following—who would look down upon them? My lord, you have put so many of the King's household out of communion, that they begin to smile at it.

Becket. At their peril, at their peril——

Walter Map. —For tho' the drop may hollow out the dead stone, doth not the living skin thicken against perpetual whippings? This is the second grain of good counsel I ever proffered thee, and so cannot suffer by the rule of frequency. Have I sown it

in salt? I trust not, for before God I promise you the King hath many more wolves than he can tame in his woods of England, and if it suit their purpose to howl for the King, and you still move against him, you may have no less than to die for it; but God and his free wind grant your lordship a happy home-return and the King's kiss of peace in Kent. Farewell! I must follow the King. [*Exit.*

Herbert. Ay, and I warrant the customs. Did the King Speak of the customs?

Becket. No!—to die for it—
I live to die for it, I die to live for it.
The State will die, the Church can never die.
The King's not like to die for that which dies;
But I must die for that which never dies.
It will be so—my visions in the Lord:
It must be so, my friend! the wolves of England
Must murder her one shepherd, that the sheep
May feed in peace. False figure, Map would say.
Earth's falses are heaven's truths. And when my voice
Is martyr'd mute, and this man disappears,
That perfect trust may come again between us,
And there, there, there, not here I shall rejoice
To find my stray sheep back within the fold.
The crowd are scattering, let us move away!
And thence to England. [*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—The Outskirts of the Bower.

Geoffrey (*coming out of the wood*). Light again! light again! Margery? no, that's a finer thing there. How it glitters!

Eleanor (*entering*). Come to me, little one. How camest thou hither?

Geoffrey. On my legs.

Eleanor. And mighty pretty legs too. Thou art the prettiest child I ever saw. Wilt thou love me?

Geoffrey. No; I only love mother.

Eleanor. Ay; and who is thy mother?

Geoffrey. They call her—— But she lives secret, you see.

Eleanor. Why?

Geoffrey. Don't know why.

Eleanor. Ay, but some one comes to see her now and then. Who is he?

Geoffrey. Can't tell.

Eleanor. What does she call him?

Geoffrey. My liege.

Eleanor. Pretty one, how camest thou?

Geoffrey. There was a bit of yellow silk here and there, and it looked pretty like a glowworm, and I thought if I followed it I should find the fairies.

Eleanor. I am the fairy, pretty one, a good fairy to thy mother. Take me to her.

Geoffrey. There are good fairies and bad fairies, and sometimes she cries, and can't sleep sound o' nights because of the bad fairies.

Eleanor. She shall cry no more; she shall sleep sound enough if thou wilt take me to her. I am her good fairy.

Geoffrey. But you don't look like a good fairy. Mother does. You are not pretty, like mother.

Eleanor. We can't all of us be as pretty as thou art—(*aside*) little bastard. Come, here is a golden chain I will give thee if thou wilt lead me to thy mother.

Geoffrey. No—no gold. Mother says gold spoils all. Love is the only gold.

Eleanor. I love thy mother, my pretty boy. Show me where thou camest out of the wood.

Geoffrey. By this tree; but I don't know if I can find the way back again.

Eleanor. Where's the warder?

Geoffrey. Very bad. Somebody struck him.

Eleanor. Ay? who was that?

Geoffrey. Can't tell. But I heard say he had had a stroke, or you'd have heard his horn before now. Come along, then? we shall see the silk here and there, and I want my supper.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—ROSAMUND'S BOWER.

Rosamund. The boy so late; pray God, he be not lost.
I sent this Margery, and she comes not back;
I sent another, and she comes not back.
I go myself—so many alleys, crossings,
Paths, avenues—nay, if I lost him, now
The folds have fallen from the mystery,
And left all naked, I were lost indeed.

Enter GEOFFREY *and* ELEANOR.

Geoffrey, the pain thou hast put me to! [*Seeing* Eleanor. Ha, you!
How came you hither?

Eleanor. Your own child brought me hither!

Geoffrey. You said you couldn't trust Margery, and I watched her and followed her into the woods, and I lost her and went on and on till I found the light, and the lady, and she says she can make you sleep o' nights.

Rosamund. How dared you? Know you not this bower is secret,
Of and belonging to the King of England,
More sacred than his forests for the chase?
Nay, nay, Heaven help you; get you hence in haste
Lest worse befall you.

Eleanor. Child, I am mine own self
Of and belonging to the King. The King
Hath divers ofs and ons, ofs and belongings,
Almost as many as your true Mussulman—
Belongings, paramours, whom it pleases him
To call his wives; but so it chances, child,
That I am his main paramour, his sultana.
But since the fondest pair of doves will jar,
Ev'n in a cage of gold, we had words of late;
And thereupon he call'd my children bastards.
Do you believe that you are married to him?

Rosamund. I *should* believe it.

Eleanor. You must not believe it,
Because I have a wholesome medicine here
Puts that belief asleep. Your answer, beauty!
Do you believe that you are married to him?

Rosamund. Geoffrey, my boy, I saw the ball you lost in the fork of the great willow over the brook. Go. See that you do not fall in. Go.

Geoffrey. And leave you alone with the good fairy. She calls you beauty, but I don't like her looks. Well, you bid me go, and I'll have my ball anyhow. Shall I find you asleep when I come back?

Rosamund. Go. [*Exit* Geoffrey.

Eleanor. He is easily found again. *Do* you believe it?
I pray you then to take my sleeping-draught;
But if you should not care to take it —see! [*Draws a dagger.*
What! have I scared the red rose from your face
Into your heart? But this will find it there,
And dig it from the root for ever.

Rosamund. Help! help!
Eleanor. They say that walls have ears; but these, it seems,
Have none! and I have none—to pity thee.
Rosamund. I do beseech you—my child is so young,
So backward too; I cannot leave him yet.
I am not so happy I could not die myself,
But the child is so young. You have children—his;
And mine is the King's child; so, if you love him—
Nay, if you love him, there is great wrong done
Somehow; but if you do not—there are those
Who say you do not love him—let me go
With my young boy, and I will hide my face,
Blacken and gipsyfy it; none shall know me;
The King shall never hear of me again,
But I will beg my bread along the world
With my young boy, and God will be our guide.
I never meant you harm in any way.
See, I can say no more.
Eleanor. Will you not say you are not married to him?
Rosamund. Ay, Madam, I can *say* it, if you will.
Eleanor. Then is thy pretty boy a bastard?
Rosamund. No.
Eleanor. And thou thyself a proven wanton?
Rosamund. No.
I am none such. I never loved but one.
I have heard of such that range from love to love,
Like the wild beast—if you can call it love.
I have heard of such—yea, even among those
Who sit on thrones—I never saw any such,
Never knew any such, and howsoever
You do misname me, match'd with any such,
I am snow to mud.
Eleanor. The more the pity then
That thy true home—the heavens—cry out for thee
Who art too pure for earth.

Enter FITZURSE.

Fitzurse. Give her to me.
Eleanor. The Judas-lover of our passion-play
Hath track'd us hither.
Fitzurse. Well, why not? I follow'd
You and the child: he babbled all the way.
Give her to me to make my honeymoon.
Eleanor. Ay, as the bears love honey. Could you keep her
Indungeon'd from one whisper of the wind,
Dark even from a side glance of the moon,
And oublietted in the centre—No!
I follow out my hate and thy revenge.
Fitzurse. You bad me take revenge another way—
To bring her to the dust. . . . Come with me, love,
And I will love thee. . . Madam, let her live.
I have a far-off burrow where the King
Would miss her and for ever.
Eleanor. How sayst thou, sweetheart?
Wilt thou go with him? he will marry thee.
Rosamund. Give me the poison; set me free of him!
[Eleanor *offers the vial.*
No, no! I will not have it.
Eleanor. Then this other,
The wiser choice, because my sleeping-draught
May bloat thy beauty out of shape, and make
Thy body loathsome even to thy child;

While this but leaves thee with a broken heart,
A doll-face blanch'd and bloodless, over which
If pretty Geoffrey do not break his own,
It must be broken for him.
Rosamund. O I see now
Your purpose is to fright me—a troubadour
You play with words. You had never used so many,
Not if you meant it, I am sure. The child . . .
No . . . mercy! No! (*Kneels.*)
Eleanor. Play! . . . that bosom never
Heaved under the King's hand with such true passion
As at this loveless knife that stirs the riot,
Which it will quench in blood! Slave, if he love thee,
Thy life is worth the wrestle for it: arise,
And dash thyself against me that I may slay thee!
The worm! shall I let her go? But ha! what's here?
By very God, the cross I gave the King!
His village darling in some lewd caress
Has wheedled it off the King's neck to her own.
By thy leave, beauty Ay, the same! I warrant
Thou hast sworn on this my cross a hundred times
Never to leave him—and that merits death,
False oath on holy cross—for thou must leave him
To-day, but not quite yet. My good Fitzurse,
The running down the chase is kindlier sport
Ev'n than the death. Who knows but that thy lover
May plead so pitifully, that I may spare thee?
Come hither, man stand there. (*To* Rosamund) Take thy one chance;
Catch at the last straw. Kneel to thy lord Fitzurse;
Crouch even because thou hatest him; fawn upon him
For thy life and thy son's.
Rosamund (*rising*). I am a Clifford,
My son a Clifford and Plantagenet.
I am to die then, tho' there stand beside thee
One who might grapple with thy dagger, if he
Had aught of man, or thou of woman; or I
Would bow to such a baseness as would make me
Most worthy of it: both of us will die,
And I will fly with my sweet boy to heaven,
And shriek to all the saints among the stars.
'Eleanor of Aquitaine, Eleanor of England!
Murder'd by that adulteress Eleanor,
Whose doings are a horror to the east,
A hissing in the west!' Have we not heard
Raymond of Poitou, thine own uncle —nay,
Geoffrey Plantagenet, thine own husband's father—
Nay, ev'n the accursed heathen Saladdeen——
Strike!
I challenge thee to meet me before God.
Answer me there.
Eleanor (*raising the dagger*). This in thy bosom, fool,
And after in thy bastard's!

Enter BECKET *from behind. Catches hold of her arm.*

Becket. Murderess!
[*The dagger falls; they stare at one another. After a pause.*
Eleanor. My lord, we know you proud of your fine hand,
But having now admired it long enough,
We find that it is mightier than it seems—

At least mine own is frailer: you are laming it.
Becket. And lamed and maim'd to dislocation, better
Than raised to take a life which Henry bad me
Guard from the stroke that dooms thee after death
To wail in deathless flame.
Eleanor. Nor you, nor I
Have now to learn, my lord, that our good Henry
Says many a thing in sudden heats, which he
Gainsays by next sunrising—often ready
To tear himself for having said as much.
My lord, Fitzurse——
Becket. He too! what dost thou here?
Dares the bear slouch into the lion's den?
One downward plunge of his paw would rend away
Eyesight and manhood, life itself, from thee.
Go, lest I blast thee with anathema,
And make thee a world's horror.
Fitzurse. My lord, I shall
Remember this.
Becket. I *do* remember thee;
Lest I remember thee to the lion, go.
[*Exit* Fitzurse.
Take up your dagger; put it in the sheath.
Eleanor. Might not your courtesy stoop to hand it me?
But crowns must bow when mitres sit so high.
Well—well—too costly to be left or lost. [*Picks up the dagger.*
I had it from an Arab soldan, who,
When I was there in Antioch, marvell'd at
Our unfamiliar beauties of the west;
But wonder'd more at my much constancy
To the monk-king, Louis, our former burthen,
From whom, as being too kin, you know, my lord,
God's grace and Holy Church deliver'd us.
I think, time given, I could have talk'd him out of
His ten wives into one. Look at the hilt.
What excellent workmanship. In our poor west
We cannot do it so well.
Becket. We can do worse.
Madam, I saw your dagger at her throat;
I heard your savage cry.
Eleanor. Well acted, was it?
A comedy meant to seem a tragedy—
A feint, a farce. My honest lord, you are known
Thro' all the courts of Christendom as one
That mars a cause with over-violence.
You have wrong'd Fitzurse. I speak not of myself.
We thought to scare this minion of the King
Back from her churchless commerce with the King
To the fond arms of her first love, Fitzurse,
Who swore to marry her. You have spoilt the farce.
My savage cry? Why, she—she—when I strove
To work against her license for her good,
Bark'd out at me such monstrous charges, that
The King himself, for love of his own sons,
If hearing, would have spurn'd her; whereupon
I menaced her with this, as when we threaten
A yelper with a stick. Nay, I deny not
That I was somewhat anger'd. Do you hear me?
Believe or no, I care not. You have lost
The ear of the King. I have it. . . .
My Lord Paramount,
Our great High-priest, will not your Holiness

Vouchsafe a gracious answer to your Queen?

Becket. Rosamund hath not answer'd you one word;
Madam, I will not answer you one word
Daughter, the world hath trick'd thee. Leave it, daughter;
Come thou with me to Godstow nunnery,
And live what may be left thee of a life
Saved as by miracle alone with Him
Who gave it.

Re-enter GEOFFREY.

Geoffrey. Mother, you told me a great fib: it wasn't in the willow.

Becket. Follow us, my son, and we will find it for thee—
Or something manlier.

[*Exeunt* Becket, Rosamund, *and* Geoffrey.

Eleanor. The world hath trick'd her—that's the King; if so,
There was the farce, the feint—not mine. And yet
I am all but sure my dagger was a feint
Till the worm turn'd—not life shot up in blood,
But death drawn in;—(*looking at the vial*) *this* was no feint then? no.
But can I swear to that, had she but given
Plain answer to plain query? nay, methinks
Had she but bow'd herself to meet the wave
Of humiliation, worshipt whom she loathed,
I should have let her be, scorn'd her too much
To harm her. Henry—Becket tells him this—
To take my life might lose him Aquitaine.
Too politic for that. Imprison me?
No, for it came to nothing—only a feint.
Did she not tell me I was playing on her?
I'll swear to mine own self it was a feint.
Why should I swear, Eleanor, who am, or was,
A sovereign power? The King plucks out their eyes
Who anger him, and shall not I, the Queen,
Tear out her heart—kill, kill with knife or venom
One of his slanderous harlots? 'None of such?'
I love her none the more. Tut, the chance gone,
She lives—but not for him; one point is gain'd.
O I, that thro' the Pope divorced King Louis,
Scorning his monkery,—I that wedded Henry,
Honoring his manhood—will he not mock at me
The jealous fool balk'd of her will—with *him?*
But he and he must never meet again.
Reginald Fitzurse!

Re-enter FITZURSE.

Fitzurse. Here, Madam, at your p'easure.

Eleanor. My pleasure is to have a man about me.
Why did you slink away so like a cur?

Fitzurse. Madam, I am as much man as the King.
Madam, I fear Church-censures like your King.

Eleanor. He grovels to the Church when he's black-blooded,
But kinglike fought the proud archbishop,—kinglike
Defied the Pope, and, like his kingly sires,
The Normans, striving still to break or bind
The spiritual giant with our island laws
And customs, made me for the moment proud

Ev'n of that stale Church-bond which link'd me with him
To bear him kingly sons. I am not so sure
But that I love him still. Thou as much man!
No more of that; we will to France and be
Beforehand with the King, and brew from out
This Godstow-Becket intermeddling such
A strong hate-philtre as may madden him—madden
Against his priest beyond all hellebore.

ACT V.

SCENE I.—Castle in Normandy. King's Chamber.

Henry, Roger of York, Foliot, Jocelyn of Salisbury.

Roger of York. Nay, nay, my liege,
He rides abroad with armed followers,
Hath broken all his promises to thyself,
Cursed and anathematized us right and left,
Stirr'd up a party there against your son—
Henry. Roger of York, you always hated him,
Even when you both were boys at Theobald's.
Roger of York. I always hated boundless arrogance.
In mine own cause I strove against him there,
And in thy cause I strive against him now.
Henry. I cannot think he moves against my son,
Knowing right well with what a tenderness
He loved my son.
Roger of York. Before you made him king.
But Becket ever moves against a king.
The Church is all—the crime to be a king.
We trust your Royal Grace, lord of more land
Than any crown in Europe, will not yield
To lay your neck beneath your citizen's heel.
Henry. Not to a Gregory of my throning! No.
Foliot. My royal liege, in aiming at your love,
It may be sometimes I have overshot
My duties to our Holy Mother Church,
Tho' all the world allows I fall no inch
Behind this Becket, rather go beyond
In scourgings, macerations, mortifyings,
Fasts, disciplines that clear the spiritual eye,
And break the soul from earth. Let all that be.
I boast not: but you know thro' all this quarrel
I still have cleaved to the crown, in hope the crown
Would cleave to me that but obey'd the crown,
Crowning your son; for which our loyal service,
And since we likewise swore to obey the customs,
York and myself, and our good Salisbury here,
Are push'd from out communion of the Church.
Jocelyn of Salisbury. Becket hath trodden on us like worms, my liege;
Trodden one half dead; one half, but half-alive,
Cries to the King.
Henry (*aside*). Take care o' thyself, O King.
Jocelyn of Salisbury. Being so crush'd and so humiliated
We scarcely dare to bless the food we eat
Because of Becket.
Henry. What would ye have me do?
Roger of York. Summon your barons; take their counsel: yet

I know—could swear—as long as Becket breathes,
Your Grace will never have one quiet hour.
Henry. What? . . . Ay . . . but pray you do not work upon me.
I see your drift . . . it may be so . . . and yet
You know me easily anger'd. Will you hence?
He shall absolve you . . . you shall have redress.
I have a dizzying headache. Let me rest.
I'll call you by and by.
[*Exeunt* Roger of York, Foliot, *and* Jocelyn of Salisbury.
Would he were dead! I have lost all love for him.
If God would take him in some sudden way—
Would he were dead. [*Lies down.*
Page (*entering*). My liege, the Queen of England.
Henry. God's eyes! [*Starting up.*

Enter ELEANOR.

Eleanor. Of England? Say of Aquitaine.
I am no Queen of England. I had dream'd
I was the bride of England, and a queen.
Henry. And,—while you dream'd you were the bride of England,—
Stirring her baby-king against me? ha!
Eleanor. The brideless Becket is thy king and mine:
I will go live and die in Aquitaine.
Henry. Except I clap thee into prison here,
Lest thou shouldst play the wanton there again.
Ha, you of Aquitaine! O you of Aquitaine!
You were but Aquitaine to Louis—no wife;
You are only Aquitaine to me—no wife.
Eleanor. And why, my lord, should I be wife to one
That only wedded me for Aquitaine?
Yet this no wife—her six and thirty sail
Of Provence blew you to your English throne;
And this no wife has born you four brave sons,
And one of them at least is like to prove
Bigger in our small world than thou art.
Henry. Ay—
Richard, if he *be* mine—I hope him mine.
But thou art like enough to make him thine.
Eleanor. Becket is like enough to make all his.
Henry. Methought I had recover'd of the Becket,
That all was planed and bevell'd smooth again,
Save from some hateful cantrip of thine own.
Eleanor. I will go live and die in Aquitaine.
I dream'd I was the consort of a king,
Not one whose back his priest has broken.
Henry. What!
Is the end come? You, will you crown my foe
My victor in mid-battle? I will be
Sole master of my house. The end is mine.
What game, what juggle, what devilry are you playing?
Why do you thrust this Becket on me again?
Eleanor. Why? for I *am* true wife, and have my fears
Lest Becket thrust you even from your throne.
Do you know this cross, my liege?
Henry (*turning his head*). Away! Not I.
Eleanor. Not ev'n the central diamond, worth, I think,
Half of the Antioch whence I had it.
Henry. That?

Eleanor. I gave it you, and you your paramour;
She sends it back, as being dead to earth,
So dead henceforth to you.
Henry. Dead! you have murder'd her,
Found out her secret bower and murder'd her.
Eleanor. Your Becket knew the secret of your bower.
Henry (*calling out*). Ho there! thy rest of life is hopeless prison.
Eleanor. And what would my own Aquitaine say to that?
First, free thy captive from *her* hopeless prison.
Henry. O devil, can I free her from the grave?
Eleanor. You are too tragic: both of us are players
In such a comedy as our court of Provence
Had laugh'd at. That's a delicate Latin lay
Of Walter Map: the lady holds the cleric
Lovelier than any soldier, his poor tonsure
A crown of Empire. Will you have it again?
(*Offering the cross. He dashes it down.*)
St. Cupid, that is too irreverent.
Then mine once more. (*Puts it on.*)
Your cleric hath your lady.
Nay, what uncomely faces, could he see you!
Foam at the mouth because King Thomas, lord
Not only of your vassals but amours,
Thro' chastest honor of the Decalogue
Hath used the full authority of his Church
To put her into Godstow nunnery.
Henry. To put her into Godstow nunnery!
He dared not—liar! yet, yet I remember—
I do remember.
He bad me put her into a nunnery—
Into Godstow, into Hellstow, Devilstow!
The Church! the Church!
God's eyes! I would the Church were down in hel! [*Exit.*
Eleanor. Aha!

Enter the four KNIGHTS.

Fitzurse. What made the King cry out so furiously?
Eleanor. Our Becket, who will not absolve the Bishops.
I think ye four have cause to love this Becket.
Fitzurse. I hate him for his insolence to all.
De Tracy. And I for all his insolence to thee.
De Brito. I hate him for I hate him is my reason,
And yet I hate him for a hypocrite.
De Morville. I do not love him, for he did his best
To break the barons, and now braves the King.
Eleanor. Strike, then, at once, the King would have him—See!

Re-enter HENRY.

Henry. No man to love me, honor me, obey me!
Sluggards and fools!
The slave that eat my bread has kick'd his King!
The dog I cramm'd with dainties worried me!
The fellow that on a lame jade came to court,
A ragged cloak for saddle—he, he, he,
To shake my throne, to push into my chamber—
My bed, where ev'n the slave is private—he—
I'll have her out again, he shall absolve
The bishops—they but did my will—not you—
Sluggards and fools, why do you stand and stare?
You are no King's men—you—you—you are Becket's men.

Down with King Henry! up with the Archbishop!
Will no man free me from this pestilent priest? [*Exit.*
[*The* Knights *draw their swords.*
Eleanor. *Are* ye king's men? I am king's woman, I.
The Knights. King's men! King's men!

SCENE II.—A ROOM IN CANTERBURY MONASTERY.

BECKET *and* JOHN OF SALISBURY.

Becket. York said so?
John of Salisbury. Yes: a man may take good counsel
Ev'n from his foe.
Becket. York will say anything.
What is he saying now? gone to the King
And taken our anathema with him. York!
Can the King de-anathematize this York?
John of Salisbury. Thomas, I would thou hadst return'd to England,
Like some wise prince of this world from his wars,
With more of olive-branch and amnesty
For foes at home—thou hast raised the world against thee.
Becket. Why, John, my kingdom is not of this world.
John of Salisbury. If it were more of this world it might be
More of the next. A policy of wise pardon
Wins here as well as there. To bless thine enemies——
Becket. Ay, mine, not Heaven's.
John of Salisbury. And may there not be something
Of this world's leaven in thee too, when crying
On Holy Church to thunder out her rights
And thine own wrong so pitilessly? Ah, Thomas,
The lightnings that we think are only Heaven's
Flash sometimes out of earth against the heavens.
The soldier, when he lets his whole self go
Lost in the common good, the common wrong,
Strikes truest ev'n for his own self. I crave
Thy pardon—I have still thy leave to speak.
Thou hast waged God's war against the King; and yet
We are self-uncertain creatures, and we may,
Yea, even when we know not, mix our spites
And private hates with our defence of Heaven.

Enter EDWARD GRIM.

Becket. Thou art but yesterday from Cambridge, Grim;
What say ye there of Becket?
Grim. *I* believe him
The bravest in our roll of Primates down
From Austin—there are some—for there are men
Of canker'd judgment everywhere——
Becket. Who hold
With York, with York against me.
Grim. Well, my lord,
A stranger monk desires access to you.
Becket. York against Canterbury, York against God!
I am open to him. [*Exit* Grim.

Enter ROSAMUND *as a Monk.*

Rosamund. Can I speak with you Alone, my father?
Becket. Come you to confess?
Rosamund. Not now.
Becket. Then speak; this is my other self,
Who like my conscience never lets me be.
Rosamund (*throwing back the cowl*). I know him; our good John of Salisbury.

Becket. Breaking already from thy noviciate
To plunge into this bitter world again—
These wells of Marah. I am grieved, my daughter.
I thought that I had made a peace for thee.
Rosamund. Small peace was mine in my noviciate, father.
Thro' all closed doors a dreadful whisper crept
That thou wouldst excommunicate the King.
I could not eat, sleep, pray: I had with me
The monk's disguise thou gavest me for my bower:
I think our Abbess knew it and allow'd it.
I fled, and found thy name a charm to get me
Food, roof, and rest. I met a robber once,
I told him I was bound to see the Archbishop;
'Pass on,' he said, and in thy name I pass'd
From house to house. In one a son stone-blind
Sat by his mother's hearth: he had gone too far
Into the King's own woods; and the poor mother,
Soon as she learnt I was a friend of thine,
Cried out against the cruelty of the King.
I said it was the King's courts, not the King;
But she would not believe me, and she wish'd
The Church were king: she had seen the Archbishop once,
So mild, so kind. The people love thee, father.
Becket. Alas! when I was Chancellor to the King,
I fear I was as cruel as the King.
Rosamund. Cruel? Oh, no—it is the law, not he;
The customs of the realm.
Becket. The customs! customs!
Rosamund. My lord, you have not excommunicated him?
Oh, if you have, absolve him!
Becket. Daughter, daughter,
Deal not with things you know not.
Rosamund. I know *him*.
Then you have done it, and I call *you* cruel.
John of Salisbury. No, daughter, you mistake our good Archbishop;
For once in France the King had been so harsh,
He thought to excommunicate him—Thomas,
You could not—old affection master'd you,
You falter'd into tears.
Rosamund. God bless him for it.
Becket. Nay, make me not a woman, John of Salisbury,
Nor make me traitor to my holy office.
Did not a man's voice ring along the aisle,
'The King is sick and almost unto death.'
How could I excommunicate him then?
Rosamund. And wilt thou excommunicate him now?
Becket. Daughter, my time is short, I shall not do it.
And were it longer—well—I should not do it.
Rosamund. Thanks in this life, and in the life to come.
Becket. Get thee back to thy nunnery with all haste;
Let this be thy last trespass. But one question—
How fares thy pretty boy, the little Geoffrey?
No fever, cough, croup, sickness?
Rosamund. No, but saved
From all that by our solitude. The plagues
That smite the city spare the solitudes.
Becket. God save him from all sickness of the soul!
Thee too, thy solitude among thy nuns,
May that save thee! Doth he remember me?

Rosamund. I warrant him.
Becket. He is marvellously like thee.
Rosamund. Liker the King.
Becket. No, daughter.
Rosamund. Ay, but wait
Till his nose rises; he will be very king.
Becket. Ev'n so: but think not of the King: farewell!
Rosamund. My lord, the city is full of armed men.
Becket. Ev'n so: farewell!
Rosamund. I will but pass to vespers,
And breathe one prayer for my liege-lord the King,
His child and mine own soul, and so return.
Becket. Pray for me too: much need of prayer have I.
[Rosamund *kneels and goes.*
Dan John, how much we lose, we celibates,
Lacking the love of woman and of child.
John of Salisbury. More gain than loss; for of your wives you shall
Find one a slut whose fairest linen seems
Foul as her dust-cloth, if she used it —one
So charged with tongue, that every thread of thought
Is broken ere it joins—a shrew to boot,
Whose evil song far on into the night
Thrills to the topmost tile—no hope but death;
One slow, fat, white, a burthen of the hearth;
And one that being thwarted ever swoons
And weeps herself into the place of power;
And one an *uxor pauperis Ibyci.*
So rare the household honeymaking bee,
Man's help! but we, we have the Blessed Virgin
For worship, and our Mother Church for bride;
And all the souls we saved and father'd here
Will greet us as our babes in Paradise.
What noise was that? she told us of arm'd men
Here in the city. Will you not withdraw?
Becket. I once was out with Henry in the days
When Henry loved me, and we came upon
A wild-fowl sitting on her nest, so still
I reach'd my hand and touch'd; she did not stir;
The snow had frozen round her, and she sat
Stone-dead upon a heap of ice-cold eggs.
Look! how this love, this mother, runs thro' all
The world God made—even the beast —the bird!
John of Salisbury. Ay, still a lover of the beast and bird?
But these arm'd men—will you not hide yourself?
Perchance the fierce De Brocs from Saltwood Castle,
To assail our Holy Mother lest she brood
Too long o'er this hard egg, the world, and send
Her whole heart's heat into it, till it break
Into young angels. Pray you, hide yourself.
Becket. There was a little fair-hair'd Norman maid
Lived in my mother's house: if Rosamund is
The world's rose, as her name imports her—she
Was the world's lily.
John of Salisbury. Ay, and what of her?
Becket. She died of leprosy.
John of Salisbury. I know not why
You call these old things back again, my lord.
Becket. The drowning man, they say, remembers all

The chances of his life, just ere he dies.

John of Salisbury. Ay—but these arm'd men—will *you* drown *yourself?*

He loses half the meed of martyrdom
Who will be martyr when he might escape.

Becket. What day of the week? Tuesday?

John of Salisbury. Tuesday, my lord.

Becket. On a Tuesday was I born, and on a Tuesday
Baptized; and on a Tuesday did I fly
Forth from Northampton; on a Tuesday pass'd
From England into bitter banishment;
On a Tuesday at Pontigny came to me
The ghostly warning of my martyrdom;
On a Tuesday from mine exile I return'd,
And on a Tuesday——

[Tracy *enters, then* Fitzurse, De Brito, *and* De Morville. Monks *following.*

—on a Tuesday—— Tracy!

(*A long silence broken by* Fitzurse *saying, contemptuously*),

God help thee!

John of Salisbury (*aside*). How the good Archbishop reddens!

He never yet could brook the note of scorn.

Fitzurse. My lord, we bring a message from the King
Beyond the water; will you have it alone,
Or with these listeners near you?

Becket. As you will.

Fitzurse. Nay, as *you* will.

Becket. Nay, as *you* will.

John of Salisbury. Why then
Better perhaps to speak with them apart.
Let us withdraw.

[*All go out except the four* Knights *and* Becket.

Fitzurse. We are all alone with him.
Shall I not smite him with his own cross-staff?

De Morville. No, look! the door is open: let him be.

Fitzurse. The King condemns your excommunicating——

Becket. This is no secret, but a public matter.

In here again!

[John of Salisbury *and* Monks *return.*

Now, sirs, the King's commands!

Fitzurse. The King beyond the water, thro' our voices,
Commands you to be dutiful and leal
To your young King on this side of the water,
Not scorn him for the foibles of his youth.
What! you would make his coronation void
By cursing those who crown'd him. Out upon you!

Becket. Reginald, all men know I loved the Prince.
His father gave him to my care, and I
Became his second father: he had his faults,
For which I would have laid mine own life down
To help him from them, since indeed I loved him,
And love him next after my lord his father.
Rather than dim the splendor of his crown
I fain would treble and quadruple it
With revenues, realms, and golden provinces
So that were done in equity.

Fitzurse. You have broken
Your bond of peace, your treaty with the King—
Wakening such brawls and loud disturbances
In England, that he calls you oversea
To answer for it in his Norman courts.

Becket. Prate not of bonds, for never, oh, never again
Shall the waste voice of the bond-breaking sea

Divide me from the mother church of England,
My Canterbury. Loud disturbances!
Oh, ay—the bells rang out even to deafening,
Organ and pipe, and dulcimer, chants and hymns
In all the churches, trumpets in the halls,
Sobs, laughter, cries: they spread their raiment down
Before me—would have made my pathway flowers,
Save that it was mid-winter in the street,
But full mid-summer in those honest hearts.

Fitzurse. The King commands you to absolve the bishops
Whom you have excommunicated.

Becket. I?
Not I, the Pope. Ask *him* for absolution.

Fitzurse. But you advised the Pope.

Becket. And so I did.
They have but to submit.

The four Knights. The King commands you.
We are all King's men.

Becket. King's men at least should know
That their own King closed with me last July
That I should pass the censures of the Church
On those that crown'd young Henry in this realm,
And trampled on the rights of Canterbury.

Fitzurse. What! dare you charge the King with treachery?
He sanction thee to excommunicate
The prelates whom he chose to crown his son!

Becket. I spake no word of treachery, Reginald.
But for the truth of this I make appeal
To all the archbishops, bishops, prelates, barons,
Monks, knights, five hundred, that were there and heard.
Nay, you yourself were there: you heard yourself.

Fitzurse. I was not there.

Becket. I saw you there.

Fitzurse. I was not.

Becket. You were. I never forget anything.

Fitzurse. He makes the King a traitor, me a liar.
How long shall we forbear him?

John of Salisbury (*drawing* Becket *aside.*) O my good lord,
Speak with them privately on this hereafter.
You see they have been revelling, and I fear
Are braced and brazened up with Christmas wines
For any murderous brawl.

Becket. And yet they prate
Of mine, my brawls, when those, that name themselves
Of the King's part, have broken down our barns,
Wasted our diocese, outraged our tenants,
Lifted our produce, driven our clerics out—
Why they, your friends, those ruffians, the De Brocs,
They stood on Dover beach to murder me,
They slew my stags in mine own manor here,
Mutilated, poor brute, my sumpter-mule,
Plunder'd the vessel full of Gascon wine,
The old King's present, carried off the casks,
Kill'd half the crew, dungeon'd the other half
In Pevensey Castle——

De Morville. Why not rather then,
If this be so, complain to your young King,
Not punish of your own authority?

Becket. Mine enemies barr'd all access to the boy.
The knew he loved me.
Hugh, Hugh, how proudly you exalt your head!

'IN AMONG THE LILIES."—*Page 162.*

Nay, when they seek to overturn our rights,
I ask no leave of king, or mortal man,
To set them straight again. Alone I do it.
Give to the King the things that are the King's,
And those of God to God.
Fitzurse. Threats! threats! ye hear him.
What! will he excommunicate all the world?
[*The* Knights *come round* Becket.
De Tracy. He shall not.
De Brito. Well, as yet—I should be grateful—
He hath not excommunicated *me*.
Becket. Because thou wast *born* excommunicate.
I never spied in thee one gleam of grace.
De Brito. Your Christian's Christian charity!
Becket. By St. Denis——
De Brito. Ay, by St. Denis, now will he flame out,
And lose his head as old St. Denis did.
Becket. Ye think to scare me from my loyalty
To God and to the Holy Father. No!
Tho' all the swords in England flash'd above me
Ready to fall at Henry's word or yours—
Tho' all the loud-lung'd trumpets upon earth
Blared from the heights of all the thrones of her kings,
Blowing the world against me, I would stand
Clothed with the full authority of Rome,
Mail'd in the perfect panoply of faith,
First of the foremost of their files, who die
For God, to people heaven in the great day
When God makes up his jewels. Once I fled—
Never again, and you—I marvel at you—
Ye know what is between us. Ye have sworn
Yourselves my men when I was Chancellor—
My vassals—and yet threaten your Archbishop
In his own house.
Knights. Nothing can be between us
That goes against our fealty to the King.
Fitzurse. And in his name we charge you that ye keep
This traitor from escaping.
Becket. Rest you easy,
For I am easy to keep. I shall not fly.
Here, here, here will you find me.
De Morville. Know you not
You have spoken to the peril of your life?
Becket. As I shall speak again.
Fitzurse, De Tracy, and De Brito. To arms!
[*They rush out*, De Morville *lingers*.
Becket. De Morville,
I had thought so well of you; and even now
You seem the least assassin of the four.
Oh, do not damn yourself for company!
Is it too late for me to save your soul?
I pray you for one moment stay and speak.
De Morville. Becket, it *is* too late. [*Exit.*
Becket. Is it too late?
Too late on earth may be too soon in hell.
Knights (*in the distance*). Close the great gate—ho, there—upon the town.
Becket's Retainers. Shut the hall-doors. [*A pause.*
Becket. You hear them, brother John;
Why do you stand so silent, brother John?
John of Salisbury. For I was musing on an ancient saw,

Suaviter in modo, fortiter in re,
Is strength less strong when hand-in-hand with grace?
Gratior in pulchro corpore virtus.
Thomas,
Why should you heat yourself for such as these?
Becket. Methought I answer'd moderately enough.
John of Salisbury. As one that blows the coal to cool the fire.
My lord, I marvel why you never lean
On any man's advising but your own.
Becket. Is it so, Dan John? well, what should I have done?
John of Salisbury. You should have taken counsel with your friends
Before these bandits brake into your presence.
They seek—you make—occasion for your death.
Becket. My counsel is already taken, John.
I am prepared to die.
John of Salisbury. We are sinners all,
The best of all not all-prepared to die.
Becket. God's will be done!
John of Salisbury. Ay, well. God's will be done!
Grim (*re-entering*). My lord, the knights are arming in the garden
Beneath the sycamore.
Becket. Good! let them arm.
Grim. And one of the De Brocs is with them, Robert,
The apostate monk that was with Randulf here.
He knows the twists and turnings of the place.
Becket. No fear!
Grim. No fear, my lord.
[*Crashes on the hall-doors. The* Monks *flee.*
Becket. (*rising*). Our dovecote flown!
I cannot tell why monks should all be cowards.
John of Salisbury. Take refuge in your own cathedral, Thomas.
Becket. Do they not fight the Great Fiend day by day?
Valor and holy life should go together.
Why should all monks be cowards?
John of Salisbury. Are they so?
I say, take refuge in your own cathedral.
Becket. Ay, but I told them I would wait them here.
Grim. May they not say you dared not show yourself
In your old place? and vespers are beginning.
[*Bell rings for vespers till end of scene.*
You should attend the office, give them heart.
They fear you slain: they dread they know not what.
Becket. Ay, monks, not men.
Grim. I am a monk, my lord.
Perhaps, my lord, you wrong us.
Some would stand by you to the death.
Becket. Your pardon.
John of Salisbury. He said, 'Attend the office.'
Becket. Attend the office?
Why then—The Cross!—who bears my Cross before me?
Methought they would have brain'd me with it, John. [Grim *takes it.*
Grim. I! Would that I could bear thy cross indeed!
Becket. The Mitre!
John of Salisbury. Will you wear it?—there!
[Becket *puts on the mitre.*
Becket. The Pall!
I go to meet my King!
[*Puts on the pall.*
Grim. To meet the King?
[*Crashes on the doors as they go out.*
John of Salisbury. Why do you move with such a stateliness?
Can you not hear them yonder like a storm,
Battering the doors, and breaking thro' the walls?
Becket. Why do the heathen rage? My two good friends,
What matters murder'd here, or murder'd there?

And yet my dream foretold my martyrdom
In mine own church. It is God's will. Go on.
Nay, drag me not. We must not seem to fly.

SCENE III.—North Transept of Canterbury Cathedral.

On the right hand a flight of steps leading to the Choir, another flight on the left, leading to the North Aisle. Winter afternoon slowly darkening. Low thunder now and then of an approaching storm. Monks *heard chanting the service.* Rosamund *kneeling.*

Rosamund. O blessed saint, O glorious Benedict,—
These arm'd men in the city, these fierce faces—
Thy holy follower founded Canterbury—
Save that dear head which now is Canterbury,
Save him, he saved my life, he saved my child,
Save him, his blood would darken Henry's name;
Save him till all as saintly as thyself
He miss the searching flame of purgatory,
And pass at once perfect to Paradise.
[*Noise of steps and voices in the cloisters.*
Hark! Is it they? Coming! He is not here—
Not yet, thank heaven. O save him!
[*Goes up steps leading to choir.*
Becket (*entering, forced along by John of Salisbury and Grim*). No, I tell you!
I cannot bear a hand upon my person,
Why do you force me thus against my will?
Grim. My lord, we force you from your enemies.
Becket. As you would force a king from being crown'd.
John of Salisbury. We must not force the crown of martyrdom.
[*Service stops.* Monks *come down from the stairs that lead to the choir.*
Monks. Here is the great Archbishop! He lives! he lives!
Die with him, and be glorified together.
Becket. Together? . . . get you back! go on with the office.
Monks. Come, then, with us to vespers.
Becket. How can I come
When you so block the entry? Back, I say!
Go on with the office. Shall not Heaven be served
Tho' earth's last earthquake clash'd the minster-bells,
And the great deeps were broken up again,
And hiss'd against the sun?
[*Noise in the cloisters.*
Monks. The murderers, hark!
Let us hide! let us hide!
Becket. What do these people fear?
Monks. Those arm'd men in the cloister.
Becket. Be not such cravens!
I will go out and meet them.
Grim and others. Shut the doors!
We will not have him slain before our face.
[*They close the doors of the transept. Knocking.*
Fly, fly, my lord, before they burst the doors. [*Knocking.*
Becket. Why, these are our own monks who follow'd us!
And will you bolt them out, and have *them* slain?
Undo the doors: the church is not a castle:
Knock, and it shall be open'd. Are you deaf?
What, have I lost authority among you?
Stand by, make way!
Opens the doors. Enter Monks *from cloister.*

Come in, my friends, come in!
Nay, faster, faster!

Monks. Oh, my lord Archbishop,
A score of knights all arm'd with swords and axes—
To the choir, to the choir!

[Monks *divide, part flying by the stairs on the right, part by those on the left. The rush of these last bears* Becket *along with them some way up the steps, where he is left standing alone.*

Becket. Shall I too pass to the choir,
And die upon the Patriarchal throne
Of all my predecessors?

John of Salisbury. No, to the crypt!
Twenty steps down. Stumble not in the darkness,
Lest they should seize thee.

Grim. To the crypt? no—no,
To the chapel of St. Blaise beneath the roof!

John of Salisbury (*pointing upward and downward*). That way, or this! Save thyself either way.

Becket. Oh, no, not either way, nor any way
Save by that way which leads thro' night to light.
Not twenty steps, but one.
And fear not I should stumble in the darkness,
Not tho' it be their hour, the power of darkness,
But my hour too, the power of light in darkness!
I am not in the darkness but the light,
Seen by the Church in Heaven, the Church on earth—
The power of life in death to make her free!

[*Enter the four* Knights. John of Salisbury *flies to the altar of St. Benedict.*

Fitzurse. Here, here, King's men!
[*Catches hold of the last flying* Monk.
Where is the traitor Becket?

Monk. I am not he! I am not he, my lord.
I am not he indeed!

Fitzurse. Hence to the fiend!
[*Pushes him away.*
Where is this treble traitor to the King?

De Tracy. Where is the Archbishop, Thomas Becket?

Becket. Here.
No traitor to the King, but Priest of God,
Primate of England.
[*Descending into the transept.*
I am he ye seek.
What would ye have of me?

Fitzurse. Your life.

De Tracy. Your life.

De Morville. Save that you will absolve the bishops.

Becket. Never,—
Except they make submission to the Church.
You had my answer to that cry before.

De Morville. Why, then you are a dead man; flee!

Becket. I will not.
I am readier to be slain, than thou to slay.
Hugh, I know well thou hast but half a heart
To bathe this sacred pavement with my blood.
God pardon thee and these, but God's full curse
Shatter you all to pieces if ye harm
One of my flock!

Fitzurse. Was not the great gate shut?
They are thronging in to vespers—half the town.
We shall be overwhelm'd. Seize him and carry him!
Come with us—nay—thou art our prisoner—come!

De Morville. Ay, make him prisoner, do not harm the man.

[Fitzurse *lays hold of the* Archbishop's *pall.*

Becket. Touch me not!

De Brito. How the good priest gods himself!
He is not yet ascended to the Father.

Fitzurse. I will not only touch, but drag thee hence.

Becket. Thou art my man, thou art my vassal. Away!

[*Flings him off till he reels, almost to falling.*

De Tracy (*lays hold of the pall*). Come; as he said, thou art our prisoner.

Becket. Down!

[*Throws him headlong.*

Fitzurse (*advances with drawn sword*). I told thee that I should remember thee!

Becket. Profligate pander!

Fitzurse. Do you hear that? strike, strike.

[*Strikes off the* Archbishop's *mitre, and wounds him in the forehead.*

Becket (*covers his eyes with his hand*).

I do commend my cause to God, the Virgin,
St. Denis of France and St. Alphege of England,
And all the tutelar Saints of Canterbury.

[Grim *wraps his arms about the* Archbishop.

Spare this defence, dear brother.

[Tracy *has arisen, and approaches, hesitatingly, with his sword raised.*

Fitzurse. Strike him, Tracy!

Rosamund (*rushing down steps from the choir*). No, No, No, No!

Fitzurse. This wanton here. De Morville,
Hold her away.

De Morville. I hold her.

Rosamund (*held back by* De Morville, *and stretching out her arms*). Mercy, mercy,
As you would hope for mercy.

Fitzurse. Strike, I say.

Grim. O God, O noble knights, O sacrilege!
Strike our Archbishop in his own cathedral!
The Pope, the King, will curse you—the whole world
Abhor you; ye will die the death of dogs!
Nay, nay, good Tracy.

[*Lifts his arm.*

Fitzurse. Answer not, but strike.

De Tracy. There is my answer then.

[*Sword falls on* Grim's *arm, and glances from it, wounding* Becket.

Grim. Mine arm is sever'd.
I can no more—fight out the good fight—die
Conqueror.

[*Staggers into the chapel of St. Benedict.*

Becket (*falling on his knees*). At the right hand of Power—
Power and great glory—for thy Church, O Lord—
Into Thy hands, O Lord—into Thy hands!—— [*Sinks prone.*

De Brito. This last to rid thee of a world of brawls! (*Kills him.*)
The traitor's dead, and will arise no more.

Fitzurse. Nay, have we still'd him?
What! the great Archbishop!
Does he breathe? No?

De Tracy. No, Reginald, he is dead. [*Storm bursts.*[1]

De Morville. Will the earth gape and swallow us?

De Brito. The deed's done—
Away!

[De Brito, De Tracy, Fitzurse, *rush out, crying* '*King's men!*' De Morville *follows slowly. Flashes of lightning thro' the Cathedral.* Rosamund *seen kneeling by the body of Becket.*

[1] *A tremendous thunderstorm actually broke over the Cathedral as the murderers were leaving it.*

THE CUP:

A TRAGEDY.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

GALATIANS.

SYNORIX, *an ex-Tetrarch.*
SINNATUS, *a Tetrarch.*
Attendant.
Boy.
Maid.
PHŒBE.
CAMMA, *wife of Sinnatus, afterwards Priestess in the Temple of Artemis.*

ROMANS.

ANTONIUS, *a Roman General.*
PUBLIUS.
Nobleman.
Messenger.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—DISTANT VIEW OF A CITY OF GALATIA.

As the curtain rises, Priestesses are heard singing in the Temple. Boy discovered on a pathway among Rocks, picking grapes. A party of Roman Soldiers, guarding a prisoner in chains, come down the pathway and exeunt.

Enter SYNORIX (*looking round*). *Singing ceases.*

Synorix. Pine, beech and plane,
oak, walnut, apricot,
Vine, cypress, poplar, myrtle, bowering-in
The city where she dwells. She past me here
Three years ago when I was flying from
My Tetrarchy to Rome. I almost touch'd her—
A maiden slowly moving on to music
Among her maidens to this Temple—O Gods!
She is my fate—else wherefore has my fate
Brought me again to her own city?—married
Since—married Sinnatus, the Tetrarch here—
But if he be conspirator, Rome will chain,
Or slay him. I may trust to gain her then
When I shall have my tetrarchy restored
By Rome, our mistress, grateful that I show'd her
The weakness and the dissonance of our clans,
And how to crush them easily. Wretched race!
And once I wish'd to scourge them to the bones.
But in this narrow breathing-time of life
Is vengeance for its own sake worth the while,
If once our ends are gain'd? and now this cup—
I never felt such passion for a woman.
[*Brings out a cup and scroll from under his cloak.*
What have I written to her?
[*Reading the scroll.*
'To the admired Camma, wife of Sinnatus, the Tetrarch, one who years ago, himself an adorer of our great goddess, Artemis, beheld you afar off worshipping in her Temple, and loved you for it, sends you this cup rescued from the burning of one of her shrines in a city thro' which he past with the Roman army: it is the cup we use in our marriages. Receive it from one who cannot at present write himself other than
'A GALATIAN SERVING BY FORCE IN THE ROMAN LEGION.'
[*Turns and looks up to Boy.*

Boy, dost thou know the house of Sinnatus?
Boy. These grapes are for the house of Sinnatus—
Close to the Temple.
Synorix. Yonder?
Boy. Yes.
Synorix (*aside*). That I
With all my range of women should yet shun
To meet her face to face at once! My boy,
[*Boy comes down rocks to him.*
Take thou this letter and this cup to Camma,
The wife of Sinnatus.
Boy. Going or gone to-day
To hunt with Sinnatus.
Synorix. That matters not.
Take thou this cup and leave it at her doors.
[*Gives the cup and scroll to the Boy.*
Boy. I will, my lord,
[*Takes his basket of grapes and exit.*

Enter ANTONIUS.

Antonius (*meeting the Boy as he goes out*). Why, whither runs the boy?
Is that the cup you rescued from the fire?
Synorix. I send it to the wife of Sinnatus,
One half besotted in religious rites.
You come here with your soldiers to enforce
The long-withholden tribute: you suspect
This Sinnatus of playing patriotism,
Which in your sense is treason. You have yet
No proof against him: now this pious cup
Is passport to their house, and open arms
To him who gave it; and once there I warrant
I worm thro' all their windings.
Antonius. If you prosper,
Our Senate, wearied of their tetrarchies,
Their quarrels with themselves, their spites at Rome,
Is like enough to cancel them, and throne
One king above them all, who shall be true
To the Roman: and from what I heard in Rome,
This tributary crown may fall to you.
Synorix. The king, the crown! their talk in Rome? is it so?
[Antonius *nods.*
Well—I shall serve Galatia taking it,
And save her from herself, and be to Rome
More faithful than a Roman.
[*Turns and sees* Camma *coming.* Stand aside,
Stand aside; here she comes!
[*Watching* Camma *as she enters with her Maid.*
Camma (*to Maid*). Where is he, girl?
Maid. You know the waterfall
That in the summer keeps the mountain side,
But after rain o'erleaps a jutting rock
And shoots three hundred feet.
Camma. The stag is there?
Maid. Seen in the thicket at the bottom there
But yester-even.
Camma. Good then, we will climb
The mountain opposite and watch the chase.
[*They descend the rocks and exeunt.*
Synorix (*watching her*). (*Aside.*) The bust of Juno and the brows and eyes
Of Venus; face and form unmatchable!
Antonius. Why do you look at her so lingeringly?
Synorix. To see if years have changed her.
Antonius (*sarcastically*). Love her, do you?
Synorix. I envied Sinnatus when he married her.
Antonius. She knows it? Ha!
Synorix. She—no, nor ev'n my face.
Antonius. Nor Sinnatus either?

Synorix. No, nor Sinnatus.
Antonius. Hot-blooded! I have heard them say in Rome,
That your own people cast you from their bounds,
For some unprincely violence to a woman,
As Rome did Tarquin.
Synorix. Well, if this were so
I here return, like Tarquin—for a crown.
Antonius. And may be foil'd like Tarquin, if you follow
Not the dry light of Rome's straight-going policy,
But the fool-fire of love or lust, which well
May make you lose yourself, may even drown you
In the good regard of Rome.
Synorix. Tut—fear me not;
I ever had my victories among women.
I am most true to Rome.
Antonius (*aside*). I hate the man!
What filthy tools our Senate works with! Still
I must obey them. (*Aloud.*) Fare you well. [*Going.*
Synorix. Farewell!
Antonius (*stopping.*) A moment! If you track this Sinnatus
In any treason, I give you here an order [*Produces a paper.*
To seize upon him. Let me sign it. (*Signs it*). There
'Antonius leader of the Roman Legion.'
[*Hands the paper* to Synorix. *Goes up pathway* and *exit.*
Synorix. Woman again!—but I am wiser now.
No rushing on the game—the net,—the net.
[*Shouts of* 'Sinnatus! Sinnatus!' *Then horn.*
Looking off stage.] He comes, a rough, bluff, simple-looking fellow.
If we may judge the kernel by the husk,
Not one to keep a woman's fealty when
Assailed by Craft and Love. I'll join with him:
I may reap something from him—come upon *her*
Again, perhaps, to-day—*her*. Who are with him?
I see no face that knows me. Shall I risk it?
I am a Roman now, they dare not touch me.
I will.
Enter Sinnatus, Huntsmen *and hounds.*
Fair Sir, a happy day to you!
You reck but little of the Roman here,
While you can take your pastime in the woods.
Sinnatus. Ay, ay, why not? What would you with me, man?
Synorix. I am a life-long lover of the chase,
And thro' a stranger fain would be allow'd
To join the hunt.
Sinnatus. Your name?
Synorix. Strato, my name.
Sinnatus. No Roman name?
Synorix. A Greek, my lord; you know
That we Galatians are both Greek and Gaul.
[*Shouts and horns in the distance.*
Sinnatus. Hillo, the stag! (*To* Synorix.) What, you are all unfurnish'd?
Give him a bow and arrows—follow—follow.
[*Exit, followed by Huntsmen.*
Synorix. Slowly but surely—till I see my way.
It is the one step in the dark beyond
Our expectation, that amazes us.
[*Distant shouts and horns.*
Hillo! Hillo!
[*Exit* Synorix. *Shouts and horns.*

SCENE II.—A Room in the Tetrarch's House.

Frescoed figures on the walls. Evening. Moonlight outside. A couch

with cushions on it. A small table with a flagon of wine, cups, plate of grapes, etc., also the cup of Scene I. A chair with drapery on it.

Camma *enters, and opens curtains of window.*

Camma. No Sinnatus yet—and there the rising moon.
[*Takes up a cithern and sits on couch. Plays and sings.*

Moon on the field and the foam,
Moon on the waste and the wold,
Moon bring him home, bring him home
Safe from the dark and the cold,
Home, sweet moon, bring him home,
Home with the flock to the fold—
Safe from the wolf——

(*Listening.*) Is he coming? I thought I heard
A footstep. No not yet. They say that Rome
Sprang from a wolf. I fear my dear lord mixt
With some conspiracy against the wolf.
This mountain shepherd never dream'd of Rome.
(*Sings.*) Safe from the wolf to the fold——
And that great break of precipice that runs
Thro' all the wood, where twenty years ago
Huntsman, and hound, and deer were all neck-broken!
Nay, here he comes.

Enter SINNATUS *followed by* SYNORIX.

Sinnatus (*angrily*). I tell thee, my good fellow,
My arrow struck the stag.
Synorix. But was it so?
Nay, you were further off: besides the wind
Went with *my* arrow.
Sinnatus. I am sure *I* struck him.
Synorix. And I am just as sure, my lord, *I* struck him.
(*Aside.*) And I may strike your game when you are gone.

Camma. Come, come, we will not quarrel about the stag.
I have had a weary day in watching you.
Yours must have been a wearier. Sit and eat,
And take a hunter's vengeance on the meats.
Sinnatus. No, no—we have eaten—we are heated. Wine!
Camma. Who is our guest?
Sinnatus. Strato he calls himself.
[Camma *offers wine to* Synorix, *while* Sinnatus *helps himself.*
Sinnatus. I pledge you, Strato.
[*Drinks.*
Synorix. And I you, my lord.
[*Drinks.*
Sinnatus (*seeing the cup sent to* Camma). What's here?
Camma. A strange gift sent to me to-day.
A sacred cup saved from a blazing shrine
Of our great Goddess, in some city where
Antonius past. I had believed that Rome
Made war upon the peoples not the Gods.
Synorix. Most like the city rose against Antonius,
Whereon he fired it, and the sacred shrine
By chance was burnt along with it.
Sinnatus. Had you then
No message with the cup?
Camma. Why, yes, see here.
[*Gives him the scroll.*

Sinnatus (*reads*). 'To the admired Camma,—beheld you afar off—loved you—sends you this cup—the cup we use in our marriages—cannot at present write himself other than

'A GALATIAN SERVING BY FORCE IN THE ROMAN LEGION.'

Serving by force! Were there no boughs to hang on,
Rivers to drown in? Serve by force? No force
Could make me serve by force.
Synorix. How then, my lord?

The Roman is encampt without your city—
The force of Rome a thousand-fold our own.
Must all Galatia hang or drown herself?
And you a Prince and Tetrarch in this province—
Sinnatus. Province!
Synorix. Well, well, they call it so in Rome.
Sinnatus (*angrily*). Province!
Synorix. A noble anger! but Antonius
To-morrow will demand your tribute —you,
Can you make war? Have you alliances?
Bithynia, Pontus, Paphlagonia?
We have had our leagues of old with Eastern kings.
There is my hand—if such a league there be.
What will you do?
Sinnatus. Not set myself abroach
And run my mind out to a random guest
Who join'd me in the hunt. You saw my hounds
True to the scent; and we have two-legg'd dogs
Among us who can smell a true occasion,
And when to bark and how.
Synorix. My good Lord Sinnatus,
I once was at the hunting of a lion.
Roused by the clamor of the chase he woke,
Came to the front of the wood—his monarch mane
Bristled about his quick ears—he stood there
Staring upon the hunter. A score of dogs
Gnaw'd at his ankles: at the last he felt
The trouble of his feet, put forth one paw,
Slew four, and knew it not, and so remain'd
Staring upon the hunter: and this Rome
Will crush you if you wrestle with her; then
Save for some slight report in her own Senate
Scarce know what she has done.
(*Aside.*) Would I could move him,
Provoke him any way! (*Aloud.*) The Lady Camma,
Wise I am sure as she is beautiful,
Will close with me that to submit at once
Is better than a wholly-hopeless war,
Our gallant citizens murder'd all in vain,
Son, husband, brother gash'd to death in vain,
And the small state more cruelly trampled on
Than had she never moved.
Camma. Sir, I had once
A boy who died a babe; but were he living
And grown to man and Sinnatus will'd it, I
Would set him in the front rank of the fight
With scarce a pang. (*Rises.*) Sir, if a state submit
At once, she may be blotted out at once
And swallow'd in the conqueror's chronicle.
Whereas in wars of freedom and defence
The glory and grief of battle won or lost
Solders a race together—yea—tho' they fail,
The names of those who fought and fell are like
A bank'd-up fire that flashes out again
From century to century, and at last
May lead them on to victory—I hope so—
Like phantoms of the Gods.
Sinnatus. Well spoken, wife.
Synorix (*bowing*). Madam, so well I yield.
Sinnatus. I should not wonder
If Synorix, who has dwelt three years in Rome
And wrought his worst against his native land,

Returns with this Antonius.
Synorix. What is Synorix?
Sinnatus. Galatian, and not know? This Synorix
Was Tetrarch here, and tyrant also—did
Dishonor to our wives.
Synorix. Perhaps you judge him
With feeble charity: being as you tell me
Tetrarch, there might be willing wives enough
To feel dishonor, honor.
Camma. Do not say so.
I know of no such wives in all Galatia.
There may be courtesans for aught I know
Whose life is one dishonor.

Enter ATTENDANT.

Attendant (*aside*). My lord, the men!
Sinnatus (*aside*). Our anti-Roman faction?
Attendant (*aside*). Ay, my lord.
Synorix (*overhearing*). (*Aside.*) I have enough — their anti-Roman faction.
Sinnatus (*aloud*). Some friends of mine would speak to me without.
You, Strato, make good cheer till I return. [*Exit.*
Synorix. I have much to say, no time to say it in.
First, lady, know myself am that Galatian
Who sent the cup.
Camma. I thank you from my heart.
Synorix. Then that I serve with Rome to serve Galatia.
That is my secret: keep it, or you sell me
To torment and to death. [*Coming closer.* For your ear only—
I love you—for your love to the great Goddess.
The Romans sent me here a spy upon you,
To draw you and your husband to your doom.
I'd sooner die than do it.
[*Takes out paper given him by Antonius.* This paper sign'd
Antonius—will you take it, read it? there!
Camma. (*Reads.*) 'You are to seize on Sinnatus,—if——'
Synorix. (*Snatches paper.*) No more.
What follows is for no wife's eyes. O Camma,
Rome has a glimpse of this conspiracy;
Rome never yet hath spar'd conspirator.
Horrible! flaying, scourging, crucifying——
Camma. I am tender enough. Why do you practise on me?
Synorix. Why should I practise on you? How you wrong me!
I am sure of being every way malign'd.
And if you should betray me to your husband——
Camma. Will *you* betray him by this order?
Synorix. See,
I tear it all to pieces, never dream'd
Of acting on it. [*Tears the paper.*
Camma. I owe you thanks for ever.
Synorix. Hath Sinnatus never told you of this plot?
Camma. What plot?
Synorix. A child's sand-castle on the beach
For the next wave—all seen,—all calculated,
All known by Rome. No chance for Sinnatus.
Camma. Why said you not as much to my brave Sinnatus?
Synorix. Brave—ay—too brave, too over-confident,
Too like to ruin himself, and you, and me!
Who else, with this black thunderbolt of Rome
Above him, would have chased the stag to-day

In the full face of all the Roman camp?
A miracle that they let him home again,
Not caught, maim'd, blinded him.
[Camma *shudders.*
(*Aside.*) I have made her tremble.
(*Aloud.*) I know they mean to torture him to death.
I dare not tell him how I came to know it;
I durst not trust him with—my serving Rome
To serve Galatia: you heard him on the letter.
Not say as much? I all but said as much.
I am sure I told him that his plot was folly.
I say it to you—you are wiser—Rome knows all,
But you know not the savagery of Rome.
Camma. O—have you power with Rome? use it for him!
Synorix. Alas! I have no such power with Rome. All that
Lies with Antonius.
[*As if struck by a sudden thought. Comes over to her.*
He will pass to-morrow
In the gray dawn before the Temple doors.
You have beauty,—O great beauty,—and Antonius,
So gracious toward women, never yet
Flung back a woman's prayer. Plead to him,
I am sure you will prevail.
Camma. Still—I should tell
My husband.
Synorix. Will he let you plead for him
To a Roman?
Camma. I fear not.
Synorix. Then do not tell him.
Or tell him, if you will, when you return,
When you have charm'd our general into mercy,
And all is safe again. O dearest lady,

[*Murmurs of* 'Synorix! Synorix!' *heard outside.*
Think,—torture,—death,—and come.
Camma. I will, I will.
And I will not betray you.
Synorix (*aside*). (*As* Sinnatus *enters.*) Stand apart.

Enter SINNATUS *and* ATTENDANT.

Sinnatus. Thou art that Synorix!
One whom thou hast wrong'd
Without there, knew thee with Antonius.
They howl for thee, to rend thee head from limb.
Synorix. I am much malign'd. I thought to serve Galatia.
Sinnatus. Serve thyself first, villain! They shall not harm
My guest within my house. There! (*points to door*) there! this door
Opens upon the forest! Out, begone!
Henceforth I am thy mortal enemy.
Synorix. However I thank thee (*draws his sword*); thou hast saved my life. [*Exit.*
Sinnatus. (*To Attendant.*) Return and tell them Synorix is not here. [*Exit Attendant.*
What did that villain Synorix say to you?
Camma. Is *he*—*that*—Synorix?
Sinnatus. Wherefore should you doubt it?
One of the men there knew him.
Camma. Only one,
And he perhaps mistaken in the face.
Sinnatus. Come, come, could he deny it? What did he say?
Camma. What *should* he say?
Sinnatus. What *should* he say, my wife!
He should say this, that being Tetrarch once
His own true people cast him from their doors
Like a base coin.
Camma. Not kindly to them?
Sinnatus. Kindly?
O the most kindly Prince in all the world!

Would clap his honest citizens on the back,
Bandy their own rude jests with them, be curious
About the welfare of their babes, their wives,
O ay — their wives — their wives. What should he say?
He should say nothing to my wife if I
Were by to throttle him! He steep'd himself
In all the lust of Rome. How should *you* guess
What manner of beast it is?
Camma. Yet he seem'd kindly,
And said he loathed the cruelties that Rome
Wrought on her vassals.
Sinnatus. Did he, *honest* man?
Camma. And you, that seldom brook the stranger here,
Have let him hunt the stag with you to-day.
Sinnatus. I warrant you now, he said *he* struck the stag.
Camma. Why no, he never touch'd upon the stag.
Sinnatus. Why so I said, *my* arrow. Well, to sleep.
[*Goes to close door.*
Camma. Nay, close not yet the door upon a night
That looks half day.
Sinnatus. True; and my friends may spy him
And slay him as he runs.
Camma. He is gone already.
Oh look,—yon grove upon the mountain,—white
In the sweet moon as with a lovelier snow!
But what a blotch of blackness underneath!
Sinnatus, you remember—yea, you must,
That there three years ago—the vast vine-bowers
Ran to the summit of the trees, and dropt
Their streamers earthward, which a breeze of May
Took ever and anon, and open'd out
The purple zone of hill and heaven; there
You told your love; and like the swaying vines—
Yea,—with our eyes,—our hearts, our prophet hopes
Let in the happy distance, and that all
But cloudless heaven which we have found together
In our three married years! You kiss'd me there
For the first time. Sinnatus, kiss me now.
Sinnatus. First kiss. (*Kisses her.*) There then. You talk almost as if it
Might be the last.
Camma. Will you not eat a little?
Sinnatus. No, no, we found a goatherd's hut and shared
His fruits and milk. Liar! You will believe
Now that he never struck the stag—a brave one
Which you shall see to-morrow.
Camma. I rise to-morrow
In the gray dawn, and take this holy cup
To lodge it in the shrine of Artemis.
Sinnatus. Good!
Camma. If I be not back in half an hour,
Come after me.
Sinnatus. What! is there danger?
Camma. Nay,
None that I know: 'tis but a step from here
To the Temple.
Sinnatus. All my brain is full of sleep.
Wake me before you go, I'll after you—
After *me* now! [*Closes door and exit.*
Camma (*drawing curtains*). Your shadow. Synorix—
His face was not malignant, and he said
That men malign'd him. Shall I go? Shall I go?
Death, torture—
'He never yet flung back a woman's prayer'—

I go, but I will have my dagger with me. [*Exit.*

SCENE III.—SAME AS SCENE I. DAWN.

Music and Singing in the Temple.

Enter SYNORIX *watchfully, after him* PUBLIUS *and* SOLDIERS.

Synorix. Publius!
Publius. Here!
Synorix. Do you remember what I told you?
Publius. When you cry 'Rome, Rome,' to seize
On whomsoever may be talking with you,
Or man, or woman, as traitors unto Rome.
Synorix. Right. Back again. How many of you are there?
Publius. Some half a score.
[*Exeunt Soldiers and* Publius.
Synorix. I have my guard about me.
I need not fear the crowd that hunted me
Across the woods, last night. I hardly gain'd
The camp at midnight. Will she come to me
Now that she knows me Synorix? Not if Sinnatus
Has told her all the truth about me. Well,
I cannot help the mould that I was cast in.
I fling all that upon my fate, my star.
I know that I am genial, I would be
Happy, and make all others happy so
They did not thwart me. Nay, she will not come.
Yet if she be a true and loving wife
She may, perchance, to save this husband. Ay!
See, see, my white bird stepping toward the snare.
Why now I count it all but miracle,
That this brave heart of mine should shake me so,
As helplessly as some unbearded boy's
When first he meets his maiden in a bower.
[*Enter* Camma (*with cup*).
The lark first takes the sunlight on his wing,
But you, twin sister of the morning star,
Forelead the sun.
Camma. Where is Antonius?
Synorix. Not here as yet. You are too early for him.
[*She crosses towards Temple.*
Synorix. Nay, whither go you now?
Camma. To lodge this cup
Within the holy shrine of Artemis,
And so return.
Synorix. To find Antonius here.
[*She goes into the Temple, he looks after her.*
The loveliest life that ever drew the light
From heaven to brood upon her, and enrich
Earth with her shadow! I trust she *will* return.
These Romans dare not violate the Temple.
No, I must lure my game into the camp.
A woman I could live and die for. What!
Die for a woman, what new faith is this?
I am not mad, not sick, not old enough
To doat on one alone. Yes, mad for her,
Camma the stately, Camma the great-hearted,
So mad, I fear some strange and evil chance
Coming upon me, for by the Gods I seem
Strange to myself.

Re-enter CAMMA.

Camma. Where is Antonius?
Synorix. Where? As I said before, you are still too early.

Camma. 'Too early to be here alone with thee;
For whether men malign thy name, or no,
It bears an evil savor among women.
Where is Antonius? (*Loud.*)
Synorix. Madam, as you know
The camp is half a league without the city;
If you will walk with me we needs must meet
Antonius coming, or at least shall find him
There in the camp.
Camma. No, not one step with thee.
Where is Antonius? (*Louder.*)
Synorix (*advancing towards her*). Then for your own sake,
Lady, I say it with all gentleness,
And for the sake of Sinnatus your husband,
I must compel you.
Camma (*drawing her dagger*). Stay!—too near is death.
Synorix (*disarming her*). Is it not easy to disarm a woman?

Enter SINNATUS (*seizes him from behind by the throat*).

Synorix (*throttled and scarce audible*). Rome! Rome!
Sinnatus. Adulterous dog!
Synorix (*stabbing him with* Camma's *dagger*). What! will you have it? [Camma *utters a cry and runs to* Sinnatus.
Sinnatus (*falls backward*). I have it in my heart—to the Temple—fly—
For *my* sake—or they seize on thee. Remember!
Away—farewell! [*Dies.*
Camma (*runs up the steps into the Temple, looking back*). Farewell!
Synorix (*seeing her escape*). The women of the Temple drag her in.
Publius! Publius! No,
Antonius would not suffer me to break
Into the sanctuary. She hath escaped.
[*Looking down at* Sinnatus.
'Adulterous dog!' that red-faced rage at me!
Then with one quick short stab—eternal peace.
So end all passions. Then what use in passions?
To warm the cold bounds of our dying life
And, lest we freeze in mortal apathy,
Employ us, heat us, quicken us, help us, keep us
From seeing all too near that urn, those ashes
Which all must be. Well used, they serve us well.
I heard a saying in Egypt, that ambibition
Is like the sea wave, which the more you drink,
The more you thirst—yea—drink too much, as men
Have done on rafts of wreck—it drives you mad.
I will be no such wreck, am no such gamester
As, having won the stake, would dare the chance
Of double, or losing all. The Roman Senate,
For I have always play'd into their hands,
Means me the crown. And Camma for my bride—
The people love her—if I win her love,
They too will cleave to me, as one with her.
There then I rest, Rome's tributary king.
[*Looking down on* Sinnatus.
Why did I strike him?—having proof enough
Against the man, I surely should have left
That stroke to Rome. He saved my life too. Did he?
It seem'd so. I have play'd the sudden fool.
And that sets her against me—for the moment.

Camma—well, well, I never found the woman
I could not force or wheedle to my will.
She will be glad at last to wear my crown.
And I will make Galatia prosperous too,
And we will chirp among our vines, and smile
At bygone things till that (*pointing to* Sinnatus) eternal peace.
Rome! Rome!
[*Enter* Publius *and* Soldiers.
Twice I cried Rome. Why came ye not before?
Publius. Why come we now? Whom shall we seize upon?
Synorix (*pointing to the body of* Sinnatus). The body of that dead traitor Sinnatus.
Bear him away.
Music and Singing in Temple.

ACT II.

SCENE.—INTERIOR OF THE TEMPLE OF ARTEMIS.

Small gold gates on platform in front of the veil before the colossal statue of the Goddess, and in the centre of the Temple a tripod altar, on which is a lighted lamp. Lamps (lighted) suspended between each pillar. Tripods, vases, garlands of flowers, etc., about stage. Altar at back close to Goddess, with two cups. Solemn music. Priestesses decorating the Temple.

(*The Chorus of* PRIESTESSES *sing as they enter.*)

Artemis, Artemis, hear us, O Mother, hear us, and bless us!
Artemis, thou that art life to the wind, to the wave, to the glebe, to the fire!
Hear thy people who praise thee! O help us from all that oppress us!
Hear thy priestesses hymn thy glory!
O yield them all their desire!
Priestess. Phœbe, that man from Synorix, who has been
So oft to see the Priestess, waits once more
Before the Temple
Phœbe. We will let her know.
[*Signs to one of the Priestesses, who goes out.*
Since Camma fled from Synorix to our Temple,
And for her beauty, stateliness, and power,
Was chosen Priestess here, have you not mark'd
Her eyes were ever on the marble floor?
To-day they are fixt and bright—they look straight out.
Hath she made up her mind to marry him?
Priestess. To marry him who stabb'd her Sinnatus.
You will not easily make me credit that.
Phœbe. Ask her.

Enter CAMMA *as Priestess* (*in front of the curtains*).

Priestess. You will not marry Synorix?
Camma. My girl, I am the bride of Death, and only
Marry the dead.
Priestess. Not Synorix then?
Camma. My girl,
At times this oracle of great Artemis
Has no more power than other oracles
To speak directly.
Phœbe. Will you speak to him,
The messenger from Synorix who waits
Before the Temple?
Camma. Why not? Let him enter.
[*Comes forward on to step by tripod.*

Enter a MESSENGER.

Messenger (*kneels*). Greeting and health from Synorix! More than once

"MAUD'S OWN LITTLE OAK-ROOM."—*Page 163.*

You have refused his hand. When last I saw you,
You all but yielded. He entreats you now
For your last answer. When he struck at Sinnatus—
As I have many a time declared to you—
He knew not at the moment who had fasten'd
About his throat—he begs you to forget it
As scarce his act:—a random stroke: all else
Was love for you: he prays you to believe him.

Camma. I pray him to believe—that I believe him.

Messenger. Why that is well. You mean to marry him?

Camma. I mean to marry him—if that be well.

Messenger. This very day the Romans crown him king
For all his faithful services to Rome.
He wills you then this day to marry him,
And so be throned together in the sight
Of all the people, that the world may know
You twain are reconciled, and no more feuds
Disturb our peaceful vassalage to Rome.

Camma. To-day? Too sudden. I will brood upon it.
When do they crown him?

Messenger. Even now.

Camma. And where?

Messenger. Here by your temple.

Camma. Come once more to me
Before the crowning,—I will answer you. [*Exit Messenger.*

Phœbe. Great Artemis! O Camma, can it be well,
Or good, or wise, that you should clasp a hand
Red with the sacred blood of Sinnatus?

Camma. Good! mine own dagger driven by Synorix found
All good in the true heart of Sinnatus,
And quench'd it there for ever. Wise!
Life yields to death and wisdom bows to Fate,
Is wisest, doing so. Did not this man
Speak well? We cannot fight imperial Rome,
But he and I are both Galatian-born,
And tributary sovereigns, he and I
Might teach this Rome—from knowledge of our people—
Where to lay on her tribute—heavily here
And lightly there. Might I not live for that,
And drown all poor self-passion in the sense
Of public good?

Phœbe. I am sure you will not marry him.

Camma. Are you so sure? I pray you wait and see.

[*Shouts* (*from the distance*), 'Synorix! Synorix!'

Camma. Synorix, Synorix! So they cried Sinnatus
Not so long since—they sicken me. The One
Who shifts his policy suffers something, must
Accuse himself, excuse himself; the Many
Will feel no shame to give themselves the lie.

Phœbe. Most like it was the Roman soldier shouted.

Camma. Their shield-borne patriot of the morning star
Hang'd at mid-day, their traitor of the dawn
The clamor'd darling of their afternoon!
And that same head they would have play'd at ball with
And kick'd it featureless—they now would crown.

[*Flourish of trumpets.*

Enter a Galatian NOBLEMAN *with crown on a cushion.*

Noble (*kneels*). Greeting and health from Synorix. He sends you
This diadem of the first Galatian Queen,
That you may feed your fancy on the glory of it,
And join your life this day with his, and wear it
Beside him on his throne. He waits your answer.

Camma. Tell him there is one shadow among the shadows,
One ghost of all the ghosts—as yet so new,
So strange among them—such an alien there,
So much of husband in it still—that if
The shout of Synorix and Camma sitting
Upon one throne, should reach it, *it* would rise
He! . . . HE, with that red star between the ribs,
And my knife there—and blast the king and me,
And blanch the crowd with horror. I dare not, sir!
Throne him—and then the marriage—ay and tell him
That I accept the diadem of Galatia—
[*All are amazed.*
Yea; that ye saw me crown myself withal. [*Puts on the crown.*
I wait him his crown'd queen.

Noble. So will I tell him. [*Exit.*

Music. Two Priestesses go up the steps before the shrine, draw the curtains on either side (*discovering the Goddess*), *then open the gates and remain on steps, one on either side, and kneel. A priestess goes off and returns with a veil of marriage, then assists Phœbe to veil Camma. At the same time Priestesses enter and stand on either side of the Temple. Camma and all the Priestesses kneel, raise their hands to the Goddess, and bow down.*

[*Shouts*, 'Synorix! Synorix!' *All rise.*

Camma. Fling wide the doors and let the new-made children
Of our imperial mother see the show.
[*Sunlight pours through the doors.*
I have no heart to do it. (*To Phœbe*). Look for me!
[*Crouches.* Phœbe *looks out.*
[*Shouts*, 'Synorix! Synorix!'

Phœbe. He climbs the throne. Hot blood, ambition, pride
So bloat and redden his face—O would it were
His third last apoplexy! O bestial!
O how unlike our goodly Sinnatus.

Camma (*on the ground*). You wrong him surely; far as the face goes
A goodlier-looking man than Sinnatus.

Phœbe (*aside*). How dare she say it? I could hate her for it
But that she is distracted.
[*A flourish of trumpets.*

Camma. Is he crown'd?

Phœbe. Ay, there they crown him.
[*Crowd without shout*, 'Synorix! Synorix!'

[*A Priestess brings a box of spices to* Camma, *who throws them on the altar-flame.*

Camma. Rouse the dead altar-flame, fling in the spices,
Nard, Cinnamon, amomum, benzoin.
Let all the air reel into a mist of odor,
As in the midmost heart of Paradise.
Lay down the Lydian carpets for the king.
The king should pace on purple to his bride,
And music there to greet my lord the king. [*Music.*
(*To Phœbe*). Dost thou remember when I wedded Sinnatus?
Ay, thou wast there—whether from maiden fears
Or reverential love for him I loved,
Or some strange second-sight, the marriage cup
Wherefrom we make libation to the Goddess
So shook within my hand, that the red wine

Ran down the marble and lookt like blood, like blood.
Phœbe. I do remember your first-marriage fears.
Camma. I have no fears at this my second marriage.
See here—I stretch my hand out—hold it there.
How steady it is!
Phœbe. Steady enough to stab him!
Camma. O hush! O peace! This violence ill becomes
The silence of our Temple. Gentleness,
Low words best chime with this solemnity.

Enter a procession of Priestesses and Children bearing garlands and golden goblets, and strewing flowers.

Enter SYNORIX (*as King, with gold laurel-wreath crown and purple robes*), *followed by* ANTONIUS, PUBLIUS, *Noblemen, Guards, and the Populace.*

Camma. Hail, King!
Synorix. Hail, Queen!
The wheel of fate has roll'd me to the top.
I would that happiness were gold, that I
Might cast my largess of it to the crowd!
I would that every man made feast to-day
Beneath the shadow of our pines and planes!
For all my truer life begins to-day.
The past is like a travell'd land now sunk
Below the horizon—like a barren shore
That grew salt weeds, but now all drown'd in love
And glittering at full tide—the bounteous bays
And havens filling with a blissful sea.
Nor speak I now too mightily, being King
And happy! happiest, Lady, in my power
To make you happy.
Camma. Yes, sir.
Synorix. Our Antonius,
Our faithful friend of Rome, tho' Rome may set
A free foot where she will, yet of his courtesy
Entreats he may be present at our marriage.
Camma. Let him come—a legion with him, if he will.
(*To* Antonius.) Welcome, my lord Antonius, to our Temple.
(*To* Synorix.) You on this side the altar. (*To* Antonius.) You on that.
Call first upon the Goddess, Synorix.
[*All face the Goddess. Priestesses, Children, Populace, and Guards kneel—the others remain standing.*
Synorix. O Thou, that dost inspire the germ with life,
The child, a thread within the house of birth,
And give him limbs, then air, and send him forth
The glory of his father—Thou whose breath
Is balmy wind to robe our hills with grass,
And kindle all our vales with myrtle-blossom,
And roll the golden oceans of our grain,
And sway the long grape-bunches of our vines,
And fill all hearts with fatness and the lust
Of plenty—make me happy in my marriage!
Chorus (*chanting*). Artemis, Artemis, hear him, Ionian Artemis!
Camma. O Thou that slayest the babe within the womb
Or in the being born, or after slayest him
As boy or man, great Goddess, whose storm-voice
Unsockets the strong oak, and rears his root
Beyond his head, and strows our fruits, and lays

Our golden grain, and runs to sea and makes it
Foam over all the fleeted wealth of kings
And peoples, hear.
Whose arrow is the plague—whose quick flash splits
The mid-sea mast, and rifts the tower to the rock,
And hurls the victor's column down with him
That crowns it, hear.
Who causest the safe earth to shudder and gape,
And gulf and flatten in her closing chasm
Domed cities, hear.
Whose lava-torrents blast and blacken a province
To a cinder, hear.
Whose winter-cataracts find a realm and leave it
A waste of rock and ruin, hear. I call thee
To make my marriage prosper to my wish!

Chorus. Artemis, Artemis, hear her, Ephesian Artemis!

Camma. Artemis, Artemis, hear me, Galatian Artemis!

I call on our own Goddess in our own Temple.

Chorus. Artemis, Artemis, hear her, Galatian Artemis!

[*Thunder. All rise.*

Synorix (*aside*). Thunder! Ay, ay, the storm was drawing hither
Across the hills when I was being crown'd.
I wonder if I look as pale as she?

Camma. Art thou—still bent—on marrying?

Synorix. Surely—yet
These are strange words to speak to Artemis.

Camma. Words are not always what they seem, my King.

I will be faithful to thee till thou die.

Synorix. I thank thee, Camma,—I thank thee.

Camma (*turning to* Antonius). Antonius,
Much graced are we that our Queen Rome in you
Deigns to look in upon our barbarisms.

[*Turns, goes up steps to altar before the Goddess. Takes a cup from off the altar. Holds it towards* Antonius. Antonius *goes up to the foot of the steps opposite to* Synorix.

You see this cup, my lord.

[*Gives it to him.*

Antonius. Most curious!
The many-breasted mother Artemis
Emboss'd upon it.

Camma. It is old, I know not
How many hundred years. Give it me again.
It is the cup belonging our own Temple.

[*Puts it back on altar and takes up the cup of Act I. Showing it to* Antonius.

Here is another sacred to the Goddess,
The gift of Synorix; and the Goddess, being
For this most grateful, wills, thro' me her Priestess,
In honor of his gift and of our marriage,
That Synorix should drink from his own cup.

Synorix. I thank thee, Camma,—I thank thee.

Camma. For—my lord—
It is our ancient custom in Galatia
That ere two souls be knit for life and death,
They two should drink together from one cup,
In symbol of their married unity,
Making libation to the Goddess. Bring me
The costly wines we use in marriages.

[*They bring in a large jar of wine.* Camma *pours wine into cup.*

(*To* Synorix.) See here, I fill it. (*To* Antonius.) Will you drink, my lord?

Antonius. I? Why should I? I am not to be married.

Camma. But that might bring a Roman blessing on us.
Antonius (*refusing cup*). Thy pardon, Priestess!
Camma. Thou art in the right.
This blessing is for Synorix and for me.
See first I make libation to the Goddess, [*Makes libation.*
And now I drink.
[*Drinks and fills the cup again.*
Thy turn, Galatian King.
Drink and drink deep—our marriage will be fruitful.
Drink and drink deep, and thou wilt make me happy.
[Synorix *goes up to her. She hands him the cup. He drinks.*
Synorix. There, Camma! I have almost drain'd the cup—
A few drops left.
Camma. Libation to the Goddess.
[*He throws the remaining drops on the altar and gives* Camma *the cup.*
Camma (*placing the cup on the altar*). Why then the Goddess hears.
[*Comes down and forward to tripod.* Antonius *follows.*
Antonius,
Where wast thou on that morning when I came
To plead to thee for Sinnatus's life,
Beside this temple half a year ago?
Antonius. I never heard of this request of thine.
Synorix (*coming forward hastily to foot of tripod steps*). I sought him and I could not find him. Pray you,
Go on with the marriage rites.
Camma. Antonius——
'Camma!' who spake?
Antonius. Not I.
Phœbe. Nor any here.
Camma. I am all but sure that some one spake. Antonius,
If you had found him plotting against Rome,
Would you have tortured Sinnatus to death?
Antonius. No thought was mine of torture or of death,
But had I found him plotting, I had counsell'd him
To rest from vain resistance. Rome is fated
To rule the world. Then, if he had not listen'd,
I might have sent him prisoner to Rome.
Synorix. Why do you palter with the ceremony?
Go on with the marriage rites.
Camma. They are finish'd.
Synorix. How!
Camma. Thou hast drunk deep enough to make me happy.
Dost thou not feel the love I bear to thee
Glow thro' thy veins?
Synorix. The love I bear to thee
Glows thro' my veins since first I look'd on thee.
But wherefore slur the perfect ceremony?
The sovereign of Galatia weds his Queen.
Let all be done to the fullest in the sight
Of all the Gods.
Nay, rather than so clip
The flowery robe of Hymen, we would add
Some golden fringe of gorgeousness beyond
Old use, to make the day memorial, when
Synorix, first King, Camma, first Queen o' the Realm,
Drew here the richest lot from Fate, to live
And die together.
This pain—what is it?—again?
I had a touch of this last year—in—Rome.
Yes, yes. (*To* Antonius.) Your arm—a moment—It will pass.
I reel beneath the weight of utter joy—
This all too happy day, crown—queen at once. [*Staggers.*
O all ye Gods—Jupiter!—Jupiter!
[*Falls backward.*

Camma. Dost thou cry out upon the Gods of Rome?
Thou art Galatian-born. Our Artemis
Has vanquish'd their Diana.
Synorix (*on the ground*). I am poison'd.
She—close the Temple door. Let her not fly.
Camma (*leaning on tripod*). Have I not drunk of the same cup with thee?
Synorix. Ay, by the Gods of Rome and all the world,
She too—she too—the bride! the Queen! and I—
Monstrous! I that loved her.
Camma. I loved *him.*
Synorix. O murderous mad-woman! I pray you lift me
And make me walk awhile. I have heard these poisons
May be walk'd down.
[Antonius *and* Publius *raise him up.*
My feet are tons of lead,
They will break in the earth—I am sinking—hold me—
Let me alone.
[*They leave him; he sinks down on ground.*
Too late—thought myself wise—
A woman's dupe. Antonius, tell the Senate
I have been most true to Rome—would have been true
To *her*—if—if—— [*Falls as if dead.*
Camma (*coming and leaning over him*). So falls the throne of an hour.
Synorix (*half rising*). Throne? is it thou? the Fates are throned, not we—
Not guilty of ourselves—thy doom and mine—
Thou—coming my way too—Camma—good-night. [*Dies.*
Camma (*upheld by weeping Priestesses*). Thy way? poor worm, crawl down thine own black hole
To the lowest Hell. Antonius, is *he* there?
I meant thee to have follow'd—better thus.
Nay, if my people must be thralls of Rome,
He is gentle, tho' a Roman.
[*Sinks back into the arms of the Priestesses.*
Antonius. Thou art one
With thine own people, and though a Roman I
Forgive thee, Camma.
Camma (*raising herself*). 'CAMMA!'—why there again
I am most sure that some one call'd. O women,
Ye will have Roman masters. I am glad
I shall not see it. Did not some old Greek
Say death was the chief good? He had my fate for it,
Poison'd. (*Sinks back again.*) Have I the crown on? I will go
To meet him, crown'd! crown'd victor of my will—
On my last voyage—but the wind has fail'd—
Growing dark too—but light enough to row.
Row to the blessed Isles! the blessed Isles!—
Sinnatus!
Why comes he not to meet me? It is the crown
Offends him—and my hands are too sleepy
To lift it off. [Phœbe *takes the crown off.*
Who touch'd me then? I thank you.
[*Rises, with outspread arms.*
There—league on league of ever-shining shore
Beneath an ever-rising sun—I see him—
'Camma, Camma!' Sinnatus, Sinnatus! [*Dies.*

THE FALCON.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

THE COUNT FEDERIGO DEGLI ALBERIGHI.
FILIPPO, *Count's foster-brother.*
THE LADY GIOVANNA.
ELISABETTA, *the Count's nurse.*

SCENE.—AN ITALIAN COTTAGE. CASTLE AND MOUNTAINS SEEN THROUGH WINDOW.

ELISABETTA *discovered seated on stool in window darning. The Count with Falcon on his hand comes down through the door at back. A withered wreath on the wall.*

Elisabetta. So, my lord, the Lady Giovanna, who hath been away so long, came back last night with her son to the castle.

Count. Hear that, my bird! Art thou not jealous of her?
My princess of the cloud, my plumed purveyor,
My far-eyed queen of the winds—thou that canst soar
Beyond the morning lark, and how-soe'er
Thy quarry wind and wheel, swoop down upon him
Eagle-like, lightning-like—strike, make his feathers
Glance in mid heaven.
[*Crosses to chair.*
I would thou hadst a mate!
Thy breed will die with thee, and mine with me:
I am as lone and loveless as thyself.
[*Sits in chair.*
Giovanna here! Ay, ruffle thyself—*be* jealous!
Thou should'st be jealous of her. Tho' I bred thee
The full-train'd marvel of all falconry,
And love thee and thou me, yet if Giovanna
Be here again—No, no! Buss me, my bird!
The stately widow has no heart for me.
Thou art the last friend left me upon earth—
No, no again to that.
[*Rises and turns.*
My good old nurse,
I had forgotten thou wast sitting there.

Elisabetta. Ay, and forgotten thy foster-brother too.

Count. Bird-babble for my falcon! Let it pass.
What art thou doing there?

Elisabetta. Darning your lordship.
We cannot flaunt it in new feathers now:
Nay, if we *will* buy diamond necklaces
To please our lady, we must darn, my lord.
This old thing here (*points to necklace round her neck*), they are but blue beads—my Piero,
God rest his honest soul, he bought 'em for me,
Ay, but he knew I meant to marry him.
How couldst thou do it, my son? How couldst thou do it?

Count. She saw it at a dance, upon a neck
Less lovely than her own, and long'd for it.

Elisabetta. She told thee as much?

Count. No, no—a friend of hers.

Elisabetta. Shame on her that she took it at thy hands,
She rich enough to have bought it for herself!

Count. She would have robb'd me then of a great pleasure.

Elisabetta. But hath she yet return'd thy love?

Count. Not yet!

Elisabetta. She should return thy necklace then.

Count. Ay, if
She knew the giver; but I bound the seller
To silence, and I left it privily
At Florence, in her palace.

Elisabetta. And sold thine own
To buy it for her. She not know? She knows
There's none such other——

Count. Madman anywhere.
Speak freely, tho' to call a madman mad
Will hardly help to make him sane again.

Enter FILIPPO.

Filippo. Ah, the women, the women! Ah, Monna Giovanna, you here again! you that have the face of an angel and the heart of a—that's too positive! You that have a score of lovers and have not a heart for any of them—that's positive-negative: you that have *not* the head of a toad, and *not* a heart like the jewel in it—that's too negative; you that have a cheek like a peach and a heart like the stone in it—that's positive again—that's better!

Elisabetta. Sh—sh—Filippo!

Filippo (*turns half round*). Here has our master been a-glorifying and a-velveting and a-silking himself, and a-peacocking and a-spreading to catch her eye for a dozen year, till he hasn't an eye left in his own tail to flourish among the pea-hens, and all along o' you, Monna Giovanna, all along o' you!

Elisabetta. Sh—sh—Filippo! Can't you hear that you are saying behind his back what you see you are saying afore his face?

Count. Let him—he never spares me to my face!

Filippo. No, my lord, I never spare your lordship to your lordship's face, nor behind your lordship's back, nor to right, nor to left, nor to round about and back to your lordship's face again, for I'm honest, your lordship.

Count. Come, come, Filippo, what is there in the larder?

[Elisabetta *crosses to fireplace and puts on wood.*

Filippo. Shelves and hooks, shelves and hooks, and when I see the shelves I am like to hang myself on the hooks.

Count. No bread?

Filippo. Half a breakfast for a rat!

Count. Milk?

Filippo. Three laps for a cat!

Count. Cheese?

Filippo. A supper for twelve mites.

Count. Eggs?

Filippo. One, but addled.

Count. No bird?

Filippo. Half a tit and a hern's bill.

Count. Let be thy jokes and thy jerks, man! Anything or nothing?

Filippo. Well, my lord, if all-but-nothing be anything, and one plate of dried prunes be all-but-nothing, then there is anything in your lordship's larder at your lordship's service, if your lordship care to call for it.

Count. Good mother, happy was the prodigal son,
For he return'd to the rich father; I
But ad'd my poverty to thine. And all
Thro' following of my fancy. Pray thee make
Thy slender meal out of those scraps and shreds
Filippo spoke of. As for him and me,
There sprouts a salad in the garden still.
(*To the Falcon.*) Why didst thou miss thy quarry yester-even?
To-day, my beauty, thou must dash us down
Our dinner from the skies. Away, Filippo!

[*Exit, followed by* Filippo.

Elisabetta. I knew it would come to this. She has beggared him. I always knew it would come to this! (*Goes up to table as if to resume darning, and looks out of window.*) Why, as I live, there is Monna Giovanna coming down the hill from the castle. Stops and stares at our cottage. Ay,

ay! stare at it: it's all you have left us. Shame on you! *She* beautiful: sleek as a miller's mouse! Meal enough, meat enough, well fed; but beautiful —bah! Nay, see, why she turns down the path through our little vineyard, and I sneezed three times this morning. Coming to visit my lord, for the first time in her life too! Why, bless the saints! I'll be bound to confess her love to him at last. I forgive her, I forgive her! I knew it would come to this—I always knew it must come to this! (*Going up to door during latter part of speech and opens it.*) Come in, Madonna, come in. (*Retires to front of table and curtseys as the* Lady Giovanna *enters, then moves chair towards the hearth.*) Nay, let me place this chair for your ladyship.

[Lady Giovanna *moves slowly down stage, then crosses to chair, looking about her, bows as she sees the Madonna over fireplace, then sits in chair.*

Lady Giovanna. Can I speak with the Count?

Elisabetta. Ay, my lady, but won't you speak with the old woman first, and tell her all about it and make her happy? for I've been on my knees every day for these half-dozen years in hope that the saints would send us this blessed morning; and he always took you so kindly, he always took the world so kindly. When he was a little one, and I put the bitters on my breast to wean him, he made a wry mouth at it, but he took it so kindly, and your ladyship has given him bitters enough in this world, and he never made a wry mouth at you, he always took you so kindly—which is more than I did, my lady, more than I did —and he so handsome—and bless your sweet face, you look as beautiful this morning as the very Madonna her own self—and better late than never —but come when they will—then or now—it's all for the best, come when they will—they are made by the blessed saints—these marriages.

[*Raises her hands.*

Lady Giovanna. Marriages? I shall never marry again!

Elisabetta (*rises and turns*). Shame on her then!

Lady Giovanna. Where is the Count?

Elisabetta. Just gone
To fly his falcon.

Lady Giovanna. Call him back and say
I come to breakfast with him.

Elisabetta. Holy mother!
To breakfast! Oh sweet saints! one plate of prunes!
Well, Madam, I will give your message to him. [*Exit.*

Lady Giovanna. His falcon, and I come to ask for his falcon,
The pleasure of his eyes—boast of his hand—
Pride of his heart—the solace of his hours—
His one companion here—nay, I have heard
That, thro' his late magnificence of living
And this last costly gift to mine own self, [*Shows diamond necklace.*
He hath become so beggar'd, that his falcon
Ev'n wins his dinner for him in the field.
That must be talk, not truth, but truth or talk,
How can I ask for his falcon?
[*Rises and moves as she speaks.*
O my sick boy!
My daily fading Florio, it is thou
Hath set me this hard task, for when I say
What can I do—what can I get for thee?
He answers, 'Get the Count to give me his falcon,
And that will make me well.' Yet if I ask,
He loves me, and he knows I know he loves me!
Will he not pray me to return his love—
To marry him?—(*pause*)—I can never marry him.

His grandsire struck my grandsire in a brawl
At Florence, and my grandsire stabb'd him there.
The feud between our houses is the bar
I cannot cross; I dare not brave my brother,
Break with my kin. My brother hates him, scorns
The noblest-natured man alive, and I—
Who have that reverence for him that I scarce
Dare beg him to receive his diamonds back—
How can I, dare I, ask him for his falcon?
[*Puts diamonds in her casket.*

Re-enter COUNT *and* FILIPPO. COUNT *turns to* FILIPPO.

Count. Do what I said; I cannot do it myself.
Filippo. Why then, my lord, we are pauper'd out and out.
Count. Do what I said!
[*Advances and bows low.*
Welcome to this poor cottage, my dear lady.
Lady Giovanna. And welcome turns a cottage to a palace.
Count. 'Tis long since we have met!
Lady Giovanna. To make amends
I come this day to break my fast with you.
Count. I am much honor'd—yes—
[*Turns to* FILIPPO.
Do what I told thee. Must I do it myself?
Filippo. I will, I will. (*Sighs.*) Poor fellow! [*Exit.*
Count. Lady, you bring your light into my cottage
Who never deign'd to shine into my palace.
My palace wanting you was but a cottage;
My cottage, while you grace it, is a palace.
Lady Giovanna. In cottage or in palace, being still
Beyond your fortunes, you are still the king
Of courtesy and liberality.
Count. I trust I still maintain my courtesy;
My liberality perforce is dead
Thro' lack of means of giving.
Lady Giovanna. Yet I come
To ask a gift.
[*Moves toward him a little.*
Count. It will be hard, I fear,
To find one shock upon the field when all
The harvest has been carried.
Lady Giovanna. But my boy—
(*Aside.*) No, no! not yet—I cannot!
Count. Ay, how is he,
That bright inheritor of your eyes—your boy?
Lady Giovanna. Alas, my Lord Federigo, he hath fallen
Into a sickness, and it troubles me.
Count. Sick! is it so? why, when he came last year
To see me hawking, he was well enough:
And then I taught him all our hawking-phrases.
Lady Giovanna. Oh yes, and once you let him fly your falcon.
Count. How charm'd he was! what wonder?—A gallant boy,
A noble bird, each perfect of the breed.
Lady Giovanna (*sinks in chair*). What do you rate her at?
Count. My bird? a hundred
Gold pieces once were offer'd by the Duke.
I had no heart to part with her for money.
Lady Giovanna. No, not for money.
[Count *turns away and sighs.*
Wherefore do you sigh?
Count. I have lost a friend of late.
Lady Giovanna. I could sigh with you
For fear of losing more than friend, a son;
And if he leave me—all the rest of life—
That wither'd wreath were of more worth to me.

[*Looking at wreath on wall.*

Count. That wither'd wreath is of more worth to me
Than all the blossom, all the leaf of this
New-wakening year.

[*Goes and takes down wreath.*

Lady Giovanna. And yet I never saw
The land so rich in blossom as this year.

Count (*holding wreath toward her*). Was not the year when this was gather'd richer?

Lady Giovanna. How long ago was that?

Count. Alas, ten summers!
A lady that was beautiful as day
Sat by me at a rustic festival
With other beauties on a mountain meadow,
And she was the most beautiful of all;
Then but fifteen, and still as beautiful.
The mountain flowers grew thickly round about.
I made a wreath with some of these; I ask'd
A ribbon from her hair to bind it with;
I whisper'd, Let me crown you Queen of Beauty,
And softly placed the chaplet on her head.
A color, which has color'd all my life,
Flush'd in her face; then I was call'd away;
And presently all rose, and so departed.
Ah! she had thrown my chaplet on the grass,
And there I found it.

[*Lets his hands fall, holding wreath despondingly.*

Lady Giovanna (*after pause*). How long since do you say?

Count. That was the very year before you married.

Lady Giovanna. When I was married you were at the wars.

Count. Had she not thrown my chaplet on the grass,
It may be I had never seen the wars.

[*Replaces wreath whence he had taken it.*

Lady Giovanna. Ah, but, my lord, there ran a rumor then
That you were kill'd in battle. I can tell you
True tears that year were shed for you in Florence.

Count. It might have been as well for me. Unhappily
I was but wounded by the enemy there
And then imprison'd.

Lady Giovanna. Happily, however,
I see you quite recover'd of your wound.

Count. No, no, not quite, Madonna, not yet, not yet.

Re-enter FILIPPO.

Filippo. My lord, a word with you.

Count. Pray, pardon me!

[Lady Giovanna *crosses, and passes behind chair and takes down wreath; then goes to chair by table.*

Count (*to* Filippo). What is it, Filippo?

Filippo. Spoons, your lordship.

Count. Spoons!

Filippo. Yes, my lord, for wasn't my lady born with a golden spoon in her ladyship's mouth, and we haven't never so much as a silver one for the golden lips of her ladyship.

Count. Have we not half a score of silver spoons?

Filippo. Half o' one, my lord!

Count. How half of one?

Filippo. I trod upon him even now, my lord, in my hurry, and broke him.

Count. And the other nine?

Filippo. Sold! but shall I not mount with your lordship's leave to her ladyship's castle, in your lordship's and her ladyship's name, and confer with her ladyship's seneschal, and so descend again with some of her ladyship's own appurtenances?

Count. Why—no, man. Only see your cloth be clean. [*Exit* Filippo.

Lady Giovanna. Ay, ay, this faded ribbon was the mode
In Florence ten years back. What's here? a scroll
Pinned to the wreath.
My lord, you have said so much
Of this poor wreath that I was bold enough
To take it down, if but to guess what flowers
Had made it; and I find a written scroll
That seems to run in rhymings. Might I read?

Count. Ay, if you will.

Lady Giovanna. It should be if you can.
(*Reads.*) 'Dead mountain.' Nay, for who could trace a hand
So wild and staggering?

Count. This was penn'd, Madonna,
Close to the grating on a winter morn
In the perpetual twilight of a prison,
When he that made it, having his right hand
Lamed in the battle, wrote it with his left.

Lady Giovanna. O heavens! the very letters seem to shake
With cold, with pain perhaps, poor prisoner! Well,
Tell me the words—or better—for I see
There goes a musical score along with them,
Repeat them to their music.

Count. You can touch
No chord in me that would not answer you
In music.

Lady Giovanna. That is musically said.

[Count *takes guitar.* Lady Giovanna *sits listening with wreath in her hand, and quietly removes scroll and places it on table at the end of the song.*

Count (*sings, playing guitar*).
'Dead mountain flowers, dead mountain-meadow flowers,
Dearer than when you made your mountain gay,
Sweeter than any violet of to-day,
Richer than all the wide world-wealth of May,
To me, tho' all your bloom has died away,
You bloom again, dead mountain-meadow flowers.'

Enter ELISABETTA *with cloth.*

Elisabetta. A word with you, my lord!

Count (*singing*). 'O mountain flowers!'

Elisabetta. A word, my lord! (*Louder*).

Count (*sings*). 'Dead flowers!'

Elisabetta. A word, my lord! (*Louder*).

Count. I pray you pardon me again!

[Lady Giovanna *looking at wreath.*

Count (*to* Elisabetta). What is it?

Elisabetta. My lord, we have but one piece of earthenware to serve the salad in to my lady, and that cracked!

Count. Why then, that flower'd bowl my ancestor
Fetch'd from the farthest east—we never use it
For fear of breakage—but this day has brought
A great occasion. You can take it, nurse!

Elisabetta. I did take it, my lord, but what with my lady's coming that had so flurried me, and what with the fear of breaking it, I did break it, my lord: it is broken!

Count. My one thing left of value in the world!
No matter! see your cloth be white as snow!

Elisabetta (*pointing thro' window*). White? I warrant thee, my son, as the snow yonder on the very tip-top o' the mountain.

Count. And yet to speak white truth, my good old mother,
I have seen it like the snow on the moraine.

Elisabetta. How can your lordship say so? There my lord!

[*Lays cloth.*

O my dear son, be not unkind to me.
And one word more. [*Going—returns.*

Count (*touching guitar*). Good! let it be but one.

Elisabetta. Hath she return'd thy love?

Count. Not yet!

Elisabetta. And will she?

Count (*looking at* Lady Giovanna). I scarce believe it!

Elisabetta. Shame upon her then!

[*Exit.*

Count (*sings*). 'Dead mountain flowers'——

Ah well, my nurse has broken
The thread of my dead flowers, as she has broken
My china bowl. My memory is as dead.

[*Goes and replaces guitar.*

Strange that the words at home with me so long
Should fly like bosom friends when needed most.
So by your leave if you would hear the rest,
The writing.

Lady Giovanna (*holding wreath toward him*). There! my lord, you are a poet,
And can you not imagine that the wreath,
Set, as you say, so lightly on her head,
Fell with her motion as she rose, and she,
A girl, a child, then but fifteen, however
Flutter'd or flatter'd by your notice of her,
Was yet too bashful to return for it?

Count. Was it so indeed? was it so? was it so?

[*Leans forward to take wreath, and touches* Lady Giovanna's *hand, which she withdraws hastily; he places wreath on corner of chair.*

Lady Giovanna (*with dignity*). I did not say, my lord, that it was so;
I said you might imagine it was so.

Enter FILIPPO *with bowl of salad, which he places on table.*

Filippo. Here's a fine salad for my lady, for tho' we have been a soldier, and ridden by his lordship's side, and seen the red of the battle-field, yet are we now drill-sergeant to his lordship's lettuces, and profess to be great in green things and in garden-stuff.

Lady Giovanna. I thank thee, good Filippo. [*Exit* Filippo.

Enter ELISABETTA *with bird on a dish which she places on table.*

Elisabetta (*close to table*). Here's a fine fowl for my lady; I had scant time to do him in. I hope he be not underdone, for we be undone in the doing of him.

Lady Giovanna. I thank you, my good nurse.

Filippo (*re-entering with plate of prunes*). And here are fine fruits for my lady—prunes, my lady, from the tree that my lord himself planted here in the blossom of his boyhood—and so I, Filippo, being, with your ladyship's pardon, and as your ladyship knows, his lordship's own foster-brother, would commend them to your ladyship's most peculiar appreciation.

[*Puts plate on table.*

Elisabetta. Filippo!

Lady Giovanna (Count *leads her to table*). Will you not eat with me, my lord?

Count. I cannot,
Not a morsel, not one morsel. I have broken
My fast already. I will pledge you
Wine!
Filippo, wine!

[*Sits near table;* Filippo *brings flask, fills the* Count's *goblet, then* Lady Giovanna's; Elisabetta *stands at the back of* Lady Giovanna's *chair.*

Count. It is but thin and cold,
Not like the vintage blowing round your castle.
We lie too deep down in the shadow here

Your ladyship lives higher in the sun.

[*They pledge each other and drink.*

Lady Giovanna. If I might send you down a flask or two
Of that same vintage? There is iron in it.
It has been much commended as a medicine.
I give it my sick son, and if you be
Not quite recover'd of your wound, the wine
Might help you. None has ever told me yet
The story of your battle and your wound.

Filippo (*coming forward*). I can tell you, my lady, I can tell you.

Elisabetta. Filippo! will you take the word out of your master's own mouth?

Filippo. Was it there to take? Put it there, my lord.

Count. Giovanna, my dear lady, in this same battle
We had been beaten—they were ten to one.
The trumpets of the fight had echo'd down,
I and Filippo here had done our best,
And, having passed unwounded from the field,
Were seated sadly at a fountain side,
Our horses grazing by us, when a troop,
Laden with booty and with a flag of ours
Ta'en in the fight——

Filippo. Ay, but we fought for it back,
And kill'd——

Elisabetta. Filippo!

Count. A troop of horse——

Filippo. Five hundred!

Count. Say fifty!

Filippo. And we kill'd 'em by the score!

Elisabetta. Filippo!

Filippo. Well, well, well! I bite my tongue.

Count. We may have left their fifty less by five,
However, staying not to count how many,
But anger'd at their flaunting of our flag,
We mounted, and we dash'd into the heart of 'em.
I wore the lady's chaplet round my neck;
It served me for a blessed rosary.
I am sure that more than one brave fellow owed
His death to the charm in it.

Elisabetta. Hear that, my lady!

Count. I cannot tell how long we strove before
Our horses fell beneath us; down we went
Crush'd, hack'd at, trampled under-foot. The night,
As some cold-manner'd friend may strangely do us
The truest service, had a touch of frost
That help'd to check the flowing of the blood.
My last sight ere I swoon'd was one sweet face
Crown'd with the wreath. *That* seem'd to come and go.
They left us there for dead!

Elisabetta. Hear that, my lady!

Filippo. Ay, and I left two fingers there for dead. See, my lady! (*Showing his hand.*)

Lady Giovanna. I see, Filippo!

Filippo. And I have small hope of the gentleman gout in my great toe.

Lady Giovanna. And why, Filippo? [*Smiling absently.*

Filippo. I left him there for dead too!

Elisabetta. She smiles at him—how hard the woman is!
My lady, if your ladyship were not
Too proud to look upon the garland, you
Would find it stain'd——

Count (*rising*). Silence, Elisabetta!

Elisabetta. Stain'd with the blood of the best heart that ever
Beat for one woman.

[*Points to wreath on chair.*

Lady Giovanna (*rising slowly*). I can eat no more!

Count. You have but trifled with our homely salad,
But dallied with a single lettuce-leaf;
Not eaten anything.

Lady Giovanna. Nay, nay, I cannot.
You know, my lord, I told you I was troubled.
My one child Florio lying still so sick,
I bound myself, and by a solemn vow,
That I would touch no flesh till he were well
Here, or else well in Heaven, where all is well.

[Elisabetta *clears table of bird and salad:* Filippo *snatches up the plate of prunes and holds them to* Lady Giovanna.

Filippo. But the prunes, my lady, from the tree that his lordship——

Lady Giovanna. Not now, Filippo. My lord Federigo,
Can I not speak with you once more alone?

Count. You hear, Filippo? My good fellow, go!

Filippo. But the prunes that your lordship——

Elisabetta. Filippo!

Count. Ay, prune our company of thine own and go!

Elisabetta. Filippo!

Filippo (*turning*). Well, well! the women! [*Exit.*

Count. And thou too leave us, my dear nurse, alone.

Elisabetta (*folding up cloth and going*). And me too! Ay, the dear nurse will leave you alone; but, for all that, she that has eaten the yolk is scarce like to swallow the shell.

[*Turns and curtseys stiffly to* Lady Giovanna, *then exit.* Lady Giovanna *takes out diamond necklace from casket.*

Lady Giovanna. I have anger'd your good nurse; these old-world servants
Are all but flesh and blood with those they serve.
My lord, I have a present to return you,
And afterwards a boon to crave of you.

Count. No, my most honor'd and long-worshipt lady,
Poor Federigo degli Alberighi
Takes nothing in return from you except
Return of his affection—can deny
Nothing to you that you require of him.

Lady Giovanna. Then I require you to take back your diamonds— [*Offering necklace.*
I doubt not they are yours. No other heart
Of such magnificence in courtesy
Beats—out of heaven. They seem'd too rich a prize
To trust with any messenger. I came
In person to return them.

[*Count draws back.*
If the phrase
'Return' displease you, we will say—exchange them
For your—for your——

Count (*takes a step toward her and then back*). For mine—and what of mine?

Lady Giovanna. Well, shall we say this wreath and your sweet rhymes?

Count. But have you ever worn my diamonds?

Lady Giovanna. No!
For that would seem accepting of your love.
I cannot brave my brother—but be sure
That I shall never marry again, my lord!

Count. Sure?

Lady Giovanna. Yes!

Count. Is this your brother's order?

Lady Giovanna. No!
For he would marry me to the richest man
In Florence; but I think you know the saying—
'Better a man without riches, than riches without a man.'

Count. A noble saying—and acted on would yield
A nobler breed of men and women. Lady,
I find you a shrewd bargainer. The wreath
That once you wore outvalues twenty-fold
The diamonds that you never deign'd to wear.
But lay them there for a moment!
[*Points to table.* Lady Giovanna *places necklace on table.*
And be you
Gracious enough to let me know the boon
By granting which, if aught be mine to grant,
I should be made more happy than I hoped
Ever to be again.
Lady Giovanna. Then keep your wreath,
But you will find me a shrewd bargainer still.
I cannot keep your diamonds, for the gift
I ask for, to *my* mind and at this present
Outvalues all the jewels upon earth.
Count. It should be love that thus outvalues all.
You speak like love, and yet you love me not.
I have nothing in this world but love for you.
Lady Giovanna. Love? it *is* love, love for my dying boy,
Moves me to ask it of you.
Count. What? my time?
Is it my time? Well, I can give my time
To him that is a part of you, your son.
Shall I return to the castle with you? Shall I
Sit by him, read to him, tell him my tales,
Sing him my songs? You know that I can touch
The ghittern to some purpose.
Lady Giovanna. No, not that!
I thank you heartily for that—and you,
I doubt not from your nobleness of nature,
Will pardon me for asking what I ask.
Count. Giovanna, dear Giovanna, I that once
The wildest of the random youth of Florence
Before I saw you—all my nobleness
Of nature, as you deign to call it, draws
From you, and from my constancy to you.
No more, but speak.
Lady Giovanna. I will. You know sick people,
More specially sick children, have strange fancies,
Strange longings; and to thwart them in their mood
May work them grievous harm at times, may even
Hasten their end. I would you had a son!
It might be easier then for you to make
Allowance for a mother—her—who comes
To rob you of your one delight on earth.
How often has my sick boy yearn'd for this!
I have put him off as often; but to-day
I dared not—so much weaker, so much worse
For last day's journey. I was weeping for him;
He gave me his hand: 'I should be well again
If the good Count would give me——'
Count. Give me.
Lady Giovanna. His falcon.
Count (*starts back*). My falcon!
Lady Giovanna. Yes, your falcon, Federigo!
Count. Alas, I cannot!
Lady Giovanna. Cannot? Even so!
I fear'd as much. O this unhappy world!
How shall I break it to him? how shall I tell him?

"QUEEN MAUD IN ALL HER SPLENDOUR."—*Page 168.*

The boy may die: more blessed were the rags
Of some pale beggar-woman seeking alms
For her sick son, if he were like to live,
Than all my childless wealth, if mine must die.
I was to blame—the love you said you bore me—
My lord, we thank you for your entertainment. [*With a stately curtsey.*
And so return—Heaven help him!—to our son. [*Turns.*
Count (*rushes forward*). Stay, stay, I am most unlucky, most unhappy.
You never had look'd in on me before,
And when you came and dipt your sovereign head
Thro' these low doors, you ask'd to eat with me.
I had but emptiness to set before you,
No not a draught of milk, no not an egg,
Nothing but my brave bird, my noble falcon,
My comrade of the house, and of the field.
She had to die for it—she died for you.
Perhaps I thought with those of old, the nobler
The victim was, the more acceptable
Might be the sacrifice. I fear you scarce
Will thank me for your entertainment now.
Lady Giovanna (*returning*). I bear with him no longer.
Count. No, Madonna!
And he will have to bear with it as he may.
Lady Giovanna. I break with him forever!
Count. Yes, Giovanna,
But he will keep his love to you forever!
Lady Giovanna. You? you? not you! My brother! my hard brother!
O Federigo, Federigo, I love you!
Spite of ten thousand brothers, Federigo. [*Falls at his feet.*
Count (*impetuously*). Why then the dying of my noble bird
Hath served me better than her living—then
[*Takes diamonds from table.*
These diamonds are both yours and mine—have won
Their value again—beyond all markets—there
I lay them for the first time round your neck.
[*Lays necklace round her neck.*
And then this chaplet—No more feuds, but peace,
Peace and conciliation! I will make
Your brother love me. See, I tear away
The leaves were darken'd by the battle—
[*Pulls leaves off and throws them down.*
—crown you
Again with the same crown my Queen of Beauty.
[*Places wreath on her head.*
Rise—I could almost think that the dead garland
Will break once more into the living blossom.
Nay, nay, I pray you rise.
[*Raises her with both hands.*
We two together
Will help to heal your son—your son and mine—
We shall do it—we shall do it.
[*Embraces her.*
The purpose of my being is accomplish'd,
And I am happy!
Lady Giovanna. And I too, Federigo.

THE PROMISE OF MAY.

A surface man of theories, true to none.'

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

FARMER DOBSON.
MR. PHILIP EDGAR (*afterwards* MR. HAROLD).
FARMER STEER (DORA *and* EVA'S *Father*).
MR. WILSON (*a Schoolmaster*).
HIGGINS, JAMES, DAN SMITH, JACKSON, ALLEN — *Farm Laborers.*
DORA STEER.
EVA STEER.
SALLY ALLEN, MILLY — *Farm Servants.*
Farm Servants, Laborers, etc.

ACT I.

SCENE.—BEFORE FARMHOUSE.

Farming Men and Women. Farming Men carrying forms, etc., Women carrying baskets of knives and forks, etc.

1st Farming Man. Be thou a-gawin' to the long barn?

2nd Farming Man. Ay, to be sewer! Be thou?

1st Farming Man. Why, o' coorse, fur it be the owd man's birthdaäy. He be heighty this very daäy, and 'e telled all on us to be i' the long barn by one o'clock, fur he'll gie us a big dinner, and haäfe th' parish 'll be theer, an' Miss Dora, an' Miss Eva, 'an all!

2nd Farming Man. Miss Dora be coomed back, then?

1st Farming Man. Ay, haäfe an hour ago. She be in theer now. (*Pointing to house.*) Owd Steer wur afeärd she wouldn't be back i' time to keep his birthdaäy, and he wur in a tew about it all the mornin'; and he sent me wi' the gig to Littlechester to fetch 'er; and 'er an' the owd man they fell a kissin' o' one another like two sweet'arts i' the poorch as soon as he clapt eyes of 'er.

2nd Farming Man. Foälks says he likes Miss Eva the best.

1st Farming Man. Naäy, I knaws nowt o' what foälks says, an' I caäres nowt neither. Foälks doesn't hallus knaw thessens; but sewer I be, they be two o' the purtiest gels ye can see of a summer mornin'.

2nd Farming Man. Beänt Miss Eva gone off a bit of 'er good looks o' laäte?

1st Farming Man. Noä, not a bit.

2nd Farming Man. Why coöm awaäy, then, to the long barn.

[*Exeunt.*

DORA *looks out of window. Enter* DOBSON.

Dora (*singing*).

The town lay still in the low sunlight,
The hen cluckt late by the white farm gate,
The maid to her dairy came in from the cow,
The stock-dove coo'd at the fall of night,
The blossom had open'd on every bough;

O joy for the promise of May, of May,
O joy for the promise of May.

(*Nodding at* Dobson.) I'm coming down, Mr. Dobson. I haven't seen Eva yet. Is she anywhere in the garden?

Dobson. Noä, Miss. I ha'n't seed 'er neither.

Dora (*enters singing*).

But a red fire woke in the heart of the town,
And a fox from the glen ran away with the hen,
And a cat to the cream, and a rat to the cheese;
And the stock-dove coo'd, till a kite dropt down,
And a salt wind burnt the blossoming trees;
O grief for the promise of May, of May,
O grief for the promise of May.

I don't know why I sing that song; I don't love it.

Dobson. Blessings on your pretty voice, Miss Dora. Wheer did they larn ye that?

Dora. In Cumberland, Mr. Dobson.

Dobson. An' how did ye leäve the owd uncle i' Coomberland?

Dora. Getting better, Mr. Dobson. But he'll never be the same man again.

Dobson. An' how d'ye find the owd man 'ere?

Dora. As well as ever. I came back to keep his birthday.

Dobson. Well, I be coomed to keep his birthdaäy an' all. The owd man be heighty to-daäy, beänt he?

Dora. Yes, Mr. Dobson. And the day's bright like a friend, but the wind east like an enemy. Help me to move this bench for him into the sun. (*They move bench.*) No, not that way—here, under the apple tree. Thank you. Look how full of rosy blossom it is. [*Pointing to apple tree.*

Dobson. Theer be redder blossoms nor them, Miss Dora.

Dora. Where do they blow, Mr. Dobson?

Dobson. Under your eyes, Miss Dora.

Dora. Do they?

Dobson. And your eyes be as blue as——

Dora. What, Mr. Dobson? A butcher's frock?

Dobson. Noä, Miss Dora; as blue as——

Dora. Bluebell, harebell, speedwell, bluebottle, succory, forget-me-not?

Dobson. Noä, Miss Dora; as blue as——

Dora. The sky? or the sea on a blue day?

Dobson. Naäy then. I meän'd they be as blue as violets.

Dora. Are they?

Dobson. Theer ye goäs ageän, Miss, niver believing owt I says to ye—hallus a-fobbing ma off, tho' ye knaws I love ye. I warrants ye'll think moor o' this young Squire Edgar as ha' coomed among us—the Lord knaws how—ye'll think more on 'is little finger than hall my hand at the haltar.

Dora. Perhaps, Master Dobson. I can't tell, for I have never seen him. But my sister wrote that he was mighty pleasant, and had no pride in him.

Dobson. He'll be arter you now, Miss Dora.

Dora. Will he? How can I tell?

Dobson. He's been arter Miss Eva, haän't he?

Dora. Not that I know.

Dobson. Didn't I spy 'em a-sitting i' the woodbine harbor togither?

Dora. What of that? Eva told me that he was taking her likeness. He's an artist.

Dobson. What's a hartist? I doän't believe he's iver a 'eart under his waistcoat. And I tells ye what, Miss Dora: he's no respect for the Queen, or the parson, or the justice o' peace, or owt. I ha' heärd 'im a-gawin' on 'ud make your 'air—God bless it!—

stan' on end. And wuss nor that. When theer wur a meeting o' farmers at Littlechester t'other daäy, and they was all a-crying out at the bad times, he cooms up, and he calls out among our oän men, 'The land belongs to the people!'

Dora. And what did *you* say to that?

Dobson. Well, I says, s'pose my pig's the land, and you says it belongs to the parish, and theer be a thousand i' the parish, taäkin' in the women and childer; and s'pose I kills my pig, and gi'es it among 'em, why there wudn't be a dinner for nawbody, and I should ha' lost the pig.

Dora. And what did he say to that?

Dobson. Nowt—what could he saäy? But I taäkes 'im fur a bad lot and a burn fool, and I haätes the very sight on him.

Dora (*looking at* Dobson). Master Dobson, you are a comely man to look at

Dobson. I thank you for that, Miss Dora, onyhow.

Dora. Ay, but you turn right ugly when you're in an ill temper; and I promise you that if you forget yourself in your behavior to this gentleman, my father's friend, I will never change word with you again.

Enter FARMING MAN *from barn.*

Farming Man. Miss, the farming men 'ull hev their dinner i' the long barn, and the master 'ud be straänge an' pleased if you'd step in fust, and see that all be right and reg'lar fur 'em afoor he coöm. [*Exit.*

Dora. I go. Master Dobson, did you hear what I said?

Dobson. Yeas, yeas! I'll not meddle wi' 'im if he doänt meddle wi' meä. (*Exit* Dora.) Coomly, says she. I niver thowt o' mysen i' that waäy; but if she'd taäke to ma i' that waäy, or ony waäy, I'd slaäve out my life fur 'er. 'Coomly to look at,' says she—but she said it spiteful-like. To look at—yeas, 'coomly'; and she mayn't be so fur out theer. But if that be nowt to she, then it be nowt to me. (*Looking off stage.*) Schoolmaster! Why if Steer han't haxed schoolmaster to dinner, thaw 'e knaws I was hallus ageän heving schoolmaster i' the parish! fur him as be handy wi' a book bean't but haäfe a hand at a pitchfork.

Enter WILSON.

Well, Wilson. I seed that one cow 'o thine i' the pinfold ageän as I wur a-coomin' 'ere.

Wilson. Very likely, Mr. Dobson. She *will* break fence. I can't keep her in order.

Dobson. An' if tha can't keep thy one cow i' horder, how can tha keep all thy scholards i' horder? But let that goä by. What dost a know o' this Mr. Hedgar as be a-lodgin' wi' ye? I coom'd upon 'im t'other daäy lookin' at the coontry, then a-scrattin upon a bit o' paäper, then a-lookin' agean; and I taäked 'im fur soom sort of a land-surveyor—but a beänt.

Wilson. He's a Somersetshire man, and a very civil-spoken gentleman.

Dobson. Gentleman! What be he a-doing here ten mile an' moor fro' a raäil? We laäys out o' the waäy fur gentlefoälk altogither — leästwaäys they niver cooms 'ere but fur the trout i' our beck, fur they be knaw'd as far as Littlechester. But 'e doänt fish neither.

Wilson. Well, it's no sin in a gentleman not to fish.

Dobson. Noä, but I haätes 'im.

Wilson. Better step out of his road, then, for he's walking to us, and with a book in his hand.

Dobson. An' I haätes booöks an' all, fur they puts foälk off the owd waäys.

Enter EDGAR, *reading—not seeing* DOBSON *and* WILSON.

Edgar. This author, with his charm of simple style
And close dialectic, all but proving man
An automatic series of sensations,
Has often numb'd me into apathy
Against the unpleasant jolts of this rough road
That breaks off short into the abysses —made me
A Quietist taking all things easily.

Dobson. (*Aside.*) There mun be summut wrong theer, Wilson, fur I doänt understan' it.

Wilson. (*Aside.*) Nor I either, Mr. Dobson.

Dobson (*scornfully*). An' thou doänt understan' it neither—and thou schoolmaster an' all.

Edgar. What can a man, then, live for but sensations,
Pleasant ones? men of old would undergo
Unpleasant for the sake of pleasant ones
Hereafter, like the Moslem beauties waiting
To clasp their lovers by the golden gates.
For me, whose cheerless Houris after death
Are Night and Silence, pleasant ones —the while—
If possible, here! to crop the flower and pass.

Dobson. Well, I never 'eärd the likes o' that afoor.

Wilson. (*Aside.*) But I have, Mr. Dobson. It's the old Scripture text, 'Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.' I'm sorry for it, for, tho' he never comes to church, I thought better of him.

Edgar. 'What are we, says the blind old man in Lear?
'As flies to the Gods; they kill us for their sport.'

Dobson. (*Aside.*) Then the owd man i' Lear should be shaämed of hissen, but noän o' the parishes goäs by that naäme 'ereabouts.

Edgar. The Gods! but they, the shadows of ourselves,
Have past for ever. It is Nature kills,
And not for *her* sport either. She knows nothing.
Man only knows, the worse for him! for why
Cannot *he* take his pastime like the flies?
And if my pleasure breed another's pain,
Well—is not that the course of Nature too,
From the dim dawn of Being—her main law
Whereby she grows in beauty—that her flies
Must massacre each other? this poor Nature!

Dobson. Natur! Natur! Well, it be i' *my* natur to knock 'im o' the 'eäd now; but I weänt.

Edgar. A Quietist taking all things easily—why—
Have I been dipping into this again
To steel myself against the leaving her?
[*Closes book, seeing* Wilson.
Good day!

Wilson. Good day, sir.

[Dobson *looks hard at* Edgar.

Edgar (*to* Dobson). Have I the pleasure, friend, of knowing you?

Dobson. Dobson.

Edgar. Good day, then, Dobson.
[*Exit.*

Dobson. 'Good daäy then, Dobson!' Civil-spoken i'deed! Why, Wilson, tha 'eärd 'im thysen—the feller couldn't find a Mister in his mouth fur me, as farms five hoonderd haäcre.

Wilson. You never find one for me, Mr. Dobson.

Dobson. Noä, fur thou be nobbut schoolmaster; but I taäkes 'im for a Lunnun swindler, and a burn fool.

Wilson. He can hardly be both, and he pays me regular every Saturday.

Dobson. Yeas; but I haätes 'im.

Enter STEER, FARM MEN *and* WOMEN.

Steer (*goes and sits under apple tree*). Hev' ony o' ye seen Eva?

Dobson. Noä, Mr. Steer.

Steer. Well, I reckons they'll hev' a fine cider-crop to-year if the blossom 'owds. Good murnin', neighbors, and the saäme to you, my men. I taäkes it kindly of all o' you that you be coomed—what's the newspaäper word, Wilson?—celebrate—to celebrate my birthdaäy i' this fashion. Niver man 'ed better friends, and I will saäy niver master 'ed better men: fur thaw I may ha' fallen out wi' ye sometimes, the fault, mebbe, wur as much mine as yours; and, thaw I says it mysen, niver men 'ed a better master—and I knaws what men be, and what masters be, fur I wur nobbut a laäborer, and now I be a landlord—burn a plowman, and now, as far as money goäs, I be a gentleman, thaw I beänt naw scholard, fur I 'ednt naw time to maäke mysen a scholard while I wur maäkin' mysen a gentleman, but I ha taäen good care to turn out boäth my darters right down fine laädies.

Dobson. An' soä they be.

1st Farming Man. Soä they be! soä they be!

2nd Farming Man. The Lord bless boath on 'em!

3rd Farming Man. An' the saäme to you, Master.

4th Farming Man: And long life to boath on 'em. An' the saäme to you, Master Steer, likewise.

Steer. Thank ye!

Enter EVA.

Wheer 'asta been?

Eva (*timidly*). Many happy returns of the day, father.

Steer. They can't be many, my dear, but I oäpes they'll be 'appy.

Dobson. Why, tha looks haäle anew to last to a hoonderd.

Steer. An' why shouldn't I last to a hoonderd? Haäle! why shouldn't I be haäle? fur thaw I be heighty this very daäy, I niver 'es sa much as one pin's prick of paäin; an' I can taäke my glass along wi' the youngest, fur I niver touched a drop of owt till my oän wedding-daäy, an' then I wur turned huppads o' sixty. Why shouldn't I be haäle? I ha' plowed the ten-aäcre—it be mine now—afoor ony o' ye wur burn—ye all knaws the ten-aäcre—I' mun ha' plowed it moor nor a hoonderd times; hallus hup at sunrise, and I'd drive the plow straäit as a line right i' the faäce o' the sun, then back ageän, a-follering my oän shadder—then hup ageän i' the faäce o' the sun. Eh! how the sun 'ud shine, and the larks 'ud sing i' them daäys, and the smell o' the mou'd an' all. Eh! if I could ha' gone on wi' the plowin' nobbut the smell o' the mou'd 'ud ha' maäde ma live as long as Jerusalem.

Eva. Methusaleh, father.

Steer. Ay, lass, but when thou be as owd as me thou'll put one word fur another as I does.

Dobson. But, Steer, thaw thou be haäle anew I seed tha a-limpin' up just now with the roomatics i' the knee.

Steer. Roomatics! Noä; I laäme't my knee last night running arter a thief. Beänt there house-breäkers down i' Littlechester, Dobson—doänt ye hear of ony?

Dobson. Ay, that there be. Immanuel Goldsmiths was broke into o' Monday night, and ower a hoonderd pounds worth o' rings stolen.

Steer. So I thowt, and I heärd the winder—that's the winder at the end o' the passage, that goäs by thy chaumber. (*Turning to* Eva.) Why, lass, what maäkes tha sa red? Did 'e git into thy chaumber?

Eva. Father!

Steer. Well, I runned arter thief i' the dark, and fell ageän coalscuttle and my kneeä gev waäy or I'd ha' cotched 'im, but afoor I coomed up he got thruff the winder ageän.

Eva. Got thro' the window again?

Steer. Ay, but he left the mark of 'is foot i' the flower-bed; now theer be noän o' my men, thinks I to mysen,

'ud ha' done it 'cep' it were Dan Smith, fur I cotched 'im once a-steälin' coäls an' I sent fur im, an' I measured his foot wi' the mark i' the bed, but it wouldn't fit—seeäms to me the mark wur maäde by a Lunnun boot. (*Looks at* Eva.) Why, now, what maäkes tha sa white?

Eva. Fright, father!

Steer. Maäke thysen eäsy. I'll hev the winder naäiled up, and put Towser under it.

Eva (*clasping her hands*). No, no, father! Towser'll tear him all to pieces.

Steer. Let him keep awaäy, then; but coom, coom! let's be gawin. They ha' broached a barrel of aäle i' the long barn, and the fiddler be theer, and the lads and lasses 'ull hev a dance.

Eva. (*Aside.*) Dance! small heart have I to dance. I should seem to be dancing upon a grave.

Steer. Wheer be Mr. Edgar? about the premises?

Dobson. Hallus about the premises!

Steer. So much the better, so much the better. I likes 'im, and Eva likes 'im. Eva can do owt wi' 'im; look for 'im, Eva, and bring 'im to the barn. He 'ant naw pride in 'im, and we'll git 'im to speechify for us arter dinner.

Eva. Yes, father! [*Exit.*

Steer. Coom along then, all the rest o' ye! Churchwarden be a coomin, thaw me and 'im we niver 'grees about the tithe; and Parson mebbe, thaw he niver mended that gap i' the glebe fence as I telled 'im; and Blacksmith, thaw he niver shoes a herse to my likings; and Baäker, thaw I sticks to hoäm-maäde—but all on 'em welcome, all on 'em welcome; and I've hed the long barn cleared out of all the machines, and the sacks, and the taäters, and the mangles, and theer'll be room anew for all o' ye. Foller me.

All. Yeas, yeas! Three cheers for Mr. Steer!

[*All exeunt except* Dobson *into barn.*

Enter EDGAR.

Dobson (*who is going, turns*). Squire!—if so be you be a squire.

Edgar. Dobbins, I think.

Dobson. Dobbins, you thinks; and I thinks ye weärs a Lunnun boot.

Edgar. Well?

Dobson. And I thinks I'd like to taäke the measure o' your foot.

Edgar. Ay, if you'd like to measure your own length upon the grass.

Dobson. Coom, coom, that's a good un. Why, I could throw four o' ye; but I promised one of the Misses I wouldn't meddle wi' ye, and I weänt.

[*Exit into barn.*

Edgar. Jealous of me with Eva! Is it so?
Well, tho' I grudge the pretty jewel, that I
Have worn, to such a clod, yet that might be
The best way out of it, if the child could keep
Her counsel. I am sure I wish her happy.
But I must free myself from this entanglement.
I have all my life before me—so has she—
Give her a month or two, and her affections
Will flower toward the light in some new face.
Still I am half-afraid to meet her now.
She will urge marriage on me. I hate tears.
Marriage is but an old tradition. I hate
Traditions, ever since my narrow father,
After my frolic with his tenant's girl,
Made younger elder son, violated the whole
Tradition of our land, and left his heir,
Born, happily, with some sense of art, to live
By brush and pencil. By and by, when Thought
Comes down among the crowd, and man perceives that

The lost gleam of an after-life but leaves him
A beast of prey in the dark, why then the crowd
May wreak my wrongs upon my wrongers. Marriage!
That fine, fat, hook-nosed uncle of mine, old Harold,
Who leaves me all his land at Littlechester,
He, too, would oust me from his will, if I
Made such a marriage. And marriage in itself—
The storm is hard at hand will sweep away
Thrones, churches, ranks, traditions, customs, marriage
One of the feeblest! Then the man, the woman,
Following their best affinities, will each
Bid their old bond farewell with smiles, not tears;
Good wishes, not reproaches; with no fear
Of the world's gossiping clamor, and no need
Of veiling their desires.
Conventionalism,
Who shrieks by day at what she does by night,
Would call this vice; but one time's vice may be
The virtue of another; and Vice and Virtue
Are but two masks of self; and what hereafter
Shall mark out Vice from Virtue in the gulf
Of never-dawning darkness?

Enter EVA.

My sweet Eva,
Where have you lain in ambush all the morning?
They say your sister, Dora, has return'd,
And that should make you happy, if you love her!
But you look troubled.
Eva. Oh, I love her so,
I was afraid of her, and I hid myself.
We never kept a secret from each other;
She would have seen at once into my trouble,
And ask'd me what I could not answer. Oh, Philip,
Father heard you last night. Our savage mastiff,
That all but kill'd the beggar, will be placed
Beneath the window, Philip.
Edgar. Savage, is he?
What matters? Come, give me your hand and kiss me
This beautiful May-morning.
Eva. The most beautiful
May we have had for many years!
Edgar. And here
Is the most beautiful morning of this May.
Nay, you must smile upon me! There—you make
The May and morning still more beautiful,
You, the most beautiful blossom of the May.
Eva. Dear Philip, all the world is beautiful
If we were happy, and could chime in with it.
Edgar. True; for the senses, love, are for the world;
That for the senses.
Eva. Yes.
Edgar. And when the man,
The child of evolution, flings aside
His swaddling-bands, the morals of the tribe,
He, following his own instincts as his God,
Will enter on the larger golden age;
No pleasure then taboo'd: for when the tide
Of full democracy has overwhelm'd
This Old world, from that flood will rise the New,
Like the Love-goddess, with no bridal veil,
Ring, trinket of the Church, but naked Nature
In all her loveliness.
Eva. What are you saying?

Edgar. That, if we did not strain to make ourselves
Better and higher than Nature, we might be
As happy as the bees there at their honey
In these sweet blossoms.
Eva. Yes; how sweet they smell!
Edgar. There! let me break some off for you.
[*Breaking branch off.*
Eva. My thanks.
But, look, how wasteful of the blossom you are!
One, two, three, four, five, six—you have robb'd poor father
Of ten good apples. Oh, I forgot to tell you
He wishes you to dine along with us,
And speak for him after—you that are so clever!
Edgar. I grieve I cannot; but, indeed——
Eva. What is it?
Edgar. Well, business. I must leave you, love, to-day.
Eva. Leave me, to-day! And when will you return?
Edgar. I cannot tell precisely; but——
Eva. But what?
Edgar. I trust, my dear, we shall be always friends.
Eva. After all that has gone between us—friends!
What, only friends? [*Drops branch.*
Edgar. All that has gone between us
Should surely make us friends.
Eva. But keep us lovers.
Edgar. Child, do you love me now?
Eva. Yes, now and ever.
Edgar. Then you should wish us both to love for ever.
But, if you *will* bind love to one for ever,
Altho' at first he take his bonds for flowers,
As years go on, he feels them press upon him,
Begins to flutter in them, and at last
Breaks thro' them, and so flies away for ever;
While, had you left him free use of his wings,
Who knows that he had ever dream'd of flying?
Eva. But all that sounds so wicked and so strange;
'Till death us part'—those are the only words,
The true ones—nay, and those not true enough,
For they that love do not believe that death
Will part them. Why do you jest with me, and try
To fright me? Tho' you are a gentleman,
I but a farmer's daughter——
Edgar. Tut! you talk
Old feudalism. When the great Democracy
Makes a new world——
Eva. And if you be not jesting,
Neither the old world, nor the new, nor father,
Sister, nor you, shall ever see me more.
Edgar (*moved*). Then—(*aside*) Shall I say it?—(*aloud*) fly with me to-day.
Eva. No! Philip, Philip, if you do not marry me,
I shall go mad for utter shame and die.
Edgar. Then, if we needs must be conventional,
When shall your parish-parson bawl our banns
Before your gaping clowns?
Eva. Not in our church—
I think I scarce could hold my head up there.
Is there no other way?
Edgar. Yes, if you cared
To fee an over-opulent superstition,
Then they would grant you what they call a license
To marry. Do you wish it?
Eva. *Do* I wish it?
Edgar. In London.
Eva. You will write to me?
Edgar. I will.

Eva. And I will fly to you thro' the night, the storm—
Yes, tho' the fire should run along the ground,
As once it did in Egypt. Oh, you see,
I was just out of school, I had no mother—
My sister far away—and you, a gentleman,
Told me to trust you: yes, in everything—
That was the only *true* love; and I trusted—
Oh, yes, indeed, I would have died for you.
How could you—Oh, how could you? —nay, how could I?
But now you will set all right again, and I
Shall not be made the laughter of the village,
And poor old father not die miserable.

Dora (*singing in the distance*).

O joy for the promise of May, of May,
O joy for the promise of May.

Edgar. Speak not so loudly; that must be your sister.
You never told her, then, of what has past
Between us.

Eva. Never!

Edgar. Do not till I bid you.

Eva. No, Philip, no.

[*Turns away.*

Edgar (*moved*). How gracefully there she stands
Weeping—the little Niobe! What! we prize
The statue or the picture all the more
When we have made them ours! Is she less loveable,
Less lovely, being wholly mine? To stay—
Follow my art among these quiet fields,
Live with these honest folk—— And play the fool!
No! she that gave herself to me so easily
Will yield herself as easily to another.

Eva. Did you speak, Philip?

Edgar. Nothing more, farewell.

[*They embrace.*

Dora (*coming nearer*).

O grief for the promise of May, of May,
O grief for the promise of May.

Edgar (*still embracing her*). Keep up your heart until we meet again.

Eva. If that should break before we meet again?

Edgar. Break! nay, but call for Philip when you will,
And he returns.

Eva. Heaven hears you, Philip Edgar!

Edgar (*moved*). And *he* would hear you even from the grave.
Heaven curse him if he come not at your call! [*Exit.*

Enter DORA.

Dora. Well, Eva!

Eva. Oh, Dora, Dora, how long you have been away from home! Oh, how often I have wished for you! It seemed to me that we were parted for ever.

Dora. For ever, you foolish child! What's come over you? We parted like the brook yonder about the alder island, to come together again in a moment and to go on together again, till one of us be married. But where is this Mr. Edgar whom you praised so in your first letters? You haven't even mentioned him in your last?

Eva. He has gone to London.

Dora. Ay, child; and you look thin and pale. Is it for his absence? Have you fancied yourself in love with him? That's all nonsense, you know, such a baby as you are. But you shall tell me all about it.

Eva. Not now—presently. Yes, I have been in trouble, but I am happy —I think, quite happy now.

Dora (*taking* Eva's *hand*). Come, then, and make them happy in the long barn, for father is in his glory, and there is a piece of beef like a

house-side, and a plum-pudding as big as the round hay-stack. But see they are coming out for the dance already. Well, my child, let us join them.

Enter all from barn laughing. EVA *sits reluctantly under apple tree.* STEER *enters smoking, sits by* EVA.

Dance.

ACT II.

Five years have elapsed between Acts I. and II.

SCENE.—A MEADOW. ON ONE SIDE A PATHWAY GOING OVER A RUSTIC BRIDGE. AT BACK THE FARMHOUSE AMONG TREES. IN THE DISTANCE A CHURCH SPIRE.

DOBSON *and* DORA.

Dobson. So the owd uncle i' Coomberland be deäd, Miss Dora, beänt he?

Dora. Yes, Mr. Dobson, I've been attending on his deathbed and his burial.

Dobson. It be five year sin' ye went afoor to him, and it seems to me nobbut t'other day. Hesn't he left ye nowt?

Dora. No, Mr. Dobson.

Dobson. But he were mighty fond o' ye, warn't he?

Dora. Fonder of poor Eva—like everybody else.

Dobson (*handing* Dora *basket of roses*). Not like me, Miss Dora; and I ha' browt these roses to ye—I forgits what they calls 'em, but I hallus gi'ed soom on 'em to Miss Eva at this time o' year. Will ya taäke 'em? fur Miss Eva, she set the bush by my dairy winder afoor she went to school at Littlechester—so I allus browt soom on 'em to her; and now she be gone, will ye taäke 'em, Miss Dora?

Dora. I thank you. They tell me that yesterday you mentioned her name too suddenly before my father. See that you do not do so again!

Dobson. Noä; I knaws a deäl better now. I seed how the owd man wur vext.

Dora. I take them, then, for Eva's sake.

[*Takes basket, places some in her dress.*

Dobson. Eva's saäke. Yeas. Poor gel, poor gel! I can't abeär to think on 'er now, fur I'd ha' done owt fur 'er mysen; an' ony o' Steer's men, an' ony o' my men 'ud ha' done owt fur 'er, an' all the parish 'ud ha' done owt fur 'er, fur we was all on us proud on 'er, an' them theer be soom of her oän roses, an' she wur as sweet as ony on 'em—the Lord bless 'er—'er oän sen; an' weänt ye taäke 'em now, Miss Dora, fur 'er saäke an' fur my saäke an' all?

Dora. De you want them back again?

Dobson. Noä, noä! Keep 'em. But I hed a word to saäy to ye.

Dora. Why, Farmer, you should be in the hayfield looking after your men; you couldn't have more splendid weather.

Dobson. I be a going theer; but I thowt I'd bring tha them roses fust. The weather's well anew, but the glass be a bit shaäky. S'iver we've led moäst on it.

Dora. Ay! but you must not be too sudden with it either, as you were last year, when you put it in green, and your stack caught fire.

Dobson. I were insured, Miss, an' I lost nowt by it. But I weänt be too sudden wi' it; and I feel sewer, Miss Dora, that I ha' been noän too sudden wi' you, fur I ha' sarved for ye well nigh as long as the man sarved for 'is sweet'art i' Scriptur'. Weänt ye gi'e me a kind answer at last?

Dora. I have no thought of marriage, my friend. We have been in such grief these five years, not only on my sister's account, but the ill success of the farm, and the debts, and my father's breaking down, and his blindness. How could I think of leaving him?

Dobson. Eh, but I be well to do; and if ye would nobbut hev me, I would taäke the owd blind man to my oän fireside. You should hev him allus wi' ye.

Dora. You are generous, but it cannot be. I cannot love you; nay, I think I never can be brought to love any man. It seems to me that I hate men, ever since my sister left us. Oh, see here. (*Pulls out a letter.*) I wear it next my heart. Poor sister, I had it five years ago. 'Dearest Dora,—I have lost myself, and am lost for ever to you and my poor father. I thought Mr. Edgar the best of men, and he has proved himself the worst. Seek not for me, or you may find me at the bottom of the river.

EVA.'

Dobson. Be that my fault?

Dora. No; but how should I, with this grief still at my heart, take to the milking of your cows, the fatting of your calves, the making of your butter, and the managing of your poultry?

Dobson. Naäy, but I hev an owd woman as 'ud see to all that; and you should sit i' your oän parlor quite like a laädy, ye should!

Dora. It cannot be.

Dobson. And plaäy the pianner, if ye liked, all daäy long, like a laädy, ye should an' all.

Dora. It cannot be.

Dobson. And I would loove tha moor nor ony gentleman 'ud loove tha.

Dora. No, no; it cannot be.

Dobson. And p'raps ye hears 'at I soomtimes taäkes a drop too much; but that be all along o' you, Miss, because ye weänt hev me; but, if ye would, I could put all that o' one side eäsy anew.

Dora. Cannot you understand plain words, Mr. Dobson? I tell you, it cannot be.

Dobson. Eh, lass! Thy feyther eddicated his darters to marry gentlefoälk, and see what's coomed on it.

Dora. That is enough, Farmer Dobson. You have shown me that, though fortune had born *you* into the estate of a gentleman, you would still have been Farmer Dobson. You had better attend to your hayfield. Good afternoon. [*Exit.*

Dobson. 'Farmer Dobson!' Well, I be Farmer Dobson; but I thinks Farmer Dobson's dog 'ud ha' knaw'd better nor to cast her sister's misfortin inter 'er teeth arter she'd been areädin' me the letter wi' 'er voice a-shaäkin', and the drop in 'er eye. Theer she goäs! Shall I foller 'er and ax 'er to maäke it up? Noä, not yet. Let 'er cool upon it; I likes 'er all the better fur taäkin' me down, like a laädy, as she be. Farmer Dobson! I be Farmer Dobson, sewer anew; but if iver I cooms upo' Gentleman Hedgar ageän, and doänt laäy my cartwhip athurt 'is shou'ders, why then I beänt Farmer Dobson, but summun else—blaäme't if I beänt!

Enter HAYMAKERS *with a load of hay.*

The last on it, eh?

1*st Haymaker.* Yeas.

Dobson. Hoäm wi' it, then.

[*Exit surlily.*

1*st Haymaker.* Well, it be the last loäd hoäm.

2*nd Haymaker.* Yeas, an' owd Dobson should be glad on it. What maäkes 'im allus sa glum?

Sally Allen. Glum! he be wuss nor glum. He coom'd up to me yisterdaäy i' the haäyfield, when meä and my sweet'art was a workin' along o' one side wi' one another, and he sent 'im awaäy to t'other end o' the field; and when I axed 'im why, he telled me 'at sweet'arts niver worked well togither; and I telled *'im* 'at sweet'arts allus worked best togither; and then he called me a rude naäme, and I can't abide 'im.

James. Why, lass, doänt tha knaw he be sweet upo' Dora Steer, and she weänt sa much as look at 'im? And wheniver 'e sees two sweet'arts

togither like thou and me, Sally, he be fit to bust hissen wi' spites and jalousies.

Sally. Let 'im bust hissen, then, for owt *I* cares.

1*st Haymaker.* Well but, as I said afoor, it be the last load hoäm; do thou and thy sweet'art sing us hoäm to supper—'The Last Loäd Hoäm.'

All. Ay! 'The Last Loäd Hoäm.'

Song.

What did ye do, and what did ye saäy,
Wi' the wild white rose, an' the woodbine sa gaäy,
An' the midders all mow'd, an' the sky sa blue—
What did ye saäy, and what did ye do,
When ye thowt there were nawbody watchin' o' you,
And you an' your Sally was forkin' the haäy,
At the end of the daäy,
For the last loäd hoäm?

What did we do, and what did we saäy,
Wi' the briar sa green, an' the willer sa graäy,
An' the midders all mow'd, an' the sky sa blue—
Do ye think I be gawin' to tell it to you,
What we mowt saäy, and what we mowt do,
When me an' my Sally was forkin' the haäy,
At the end of the daäy,
For the last loäd hoäm?

But what did ye saäy, and what did ye do,
Wi' the butterflies out, and the swallers at plaäy,
An' the midders all mow'd, an' the sky sa blue?
Why, coom then, owd feller, I'll tell it to you;
For me an' my Sally we sweär'd to be true,
To be true to each other, let 'appen what maäy,
Till the end of the daäy
And the last loäd hoäm.

All. Well sung!

James. Fanny be the naäme i' the song, but I swopt it fur *she.* [*Pointing to* Sally.

Sally. Let ma aloän afoor foälk, wilt tha?

1*st Haymaker.* Ye shall sing that ageän to-night, fur owd Dobson 'll gi'e us a bit o' supper.

Sally. I weänt goä to owd Dobson; he wur rude to me i' tha haäyfield, and he'll be rude to me ageän to-night. Owd Steer's gotten all his grass down and wants a hand, and I'll goä to him.

1*st Haymaker.* Owd Steer gi'es nubbut cowd tea to '*is* men, and owd Dobson gi'es beer.

Sally. But I'd like owd Steer's cowd tea better nor Dobson's beer. Good-bye. [*Going.*

James. Gi'e us a buss fust, lass.

Sally. I tell'd tha to let ma aloän!

James. Why, wasn't thou and me a-bussin' o' one another t'other side o' the haäycock, when owd Dobson coom'd upo' us? I can't let tha aloän if I would, Sally. [*Offering to kiss her.*

Sally. Git along wi' ye, do! [*Exit.*

[*All laugh; exeunt singing.*

'To be true to each other, let 'appen what maäy,
Till the end o' the daäy
An' the last loäd hoäm.

Enter HAROLD.

Harold. Not Harold! 'Philip Edgar, Philip Edgar!'
Her phantom call'd me by the name she loved.
I told her I should hear her from the grave.
Ay! yonder is her casement. I remember
Her bright face beaming starlike down upon me

Thro' that rich cloud of blossom. Since I left her
Here weeping, I have ranged the world, and sat
Thro' every sensual course of that full feast
That leaves but emptiness.

Song.

'To be true to each other, let 'appen what maäy,
To the end o' the daäy
An' the last loäd hoäm.'

Harold. Poor Eva! O my God, if man be only
A willy-nilly current of sensations—
Reaction needs must follow revel—yet—
Why feel remorse, he, knowing that he *must* have
Moved in the iron grooves of Destiny?
Remorse then is a part of Destiny,
Nature a liar, making us feel guilty
Of her own faults.
My grandfather—of him
They say, that women—
O this mortal house,
Which we are born into, is haunted by
The ghosts of the dead passions of dead men;
And these take flesh again with our own flesh,
And bring us to confusion.
He was only
A poor philosopher who call'd the mind
Of children a blank page, a *tabula rasa*.
There, there, is written in invisible inks
'Lust, Prodigality, Covetousness, Craft,
Cowardice, Murder'—and the heat and fire
Of life will bring them out, and black enough,
So the child grow to manhood: better death
With our first wail then life—

Song (*further off*).

'Till the end o' the daäy
An' the last loäd hoäm,
Loäd hoäm.'

This bridge again! (*Steps on the bridge.*)
How often have I stood
With Eva here! The brook among its flowers!
Forget-me-not, meadowsweet, willow-herb.
I had some smattering of science then,
Taught her the learned names, anatomized
The flowers for her—and now I only wish
This pool were deep enough, that I might plunge
And lose myself for ever.

Enter DAN SMITH (*singing*).

Gee oop! whoä! Gee oop! whoä!
Scizzars an' Pumpy was good uns to goä
Thruf slush an' squad
When roäds was bad,
But hallus ud stop at the Vine-an'-the-Hop,
Fur boäth on 'em knawed as well as mysen
That beer be as good fur 'erses as men.
Gee oop! whoä! Gee oop! whoä!
Scizzars an' Pumpy was good uns to goä.

The beer's gotten oop into my 'eäd. S'iver I mun git along back to the farm, fur she tell'd ma to taäke the cart to Littlechester.

Enter DORA.

Half an hour late! why are you loitering here? Away with you at once. [*Exit* Dan Smith.
(*Seeing* Harold *on bridge.*)
Some madman, is it, Gesticulating there upon the bridge? I am half afraid to pass.
Harold. Sometimes I wonder, When man has surely learnt at last that all
His old-world faith, the blossom of his youth,
Has faded, falling fruitless—whether then

All of us, all at once, may not be seized
With some fierce passion, not so much for Death
As against Life! all, all, into the dark—
No more!—and science now could drug and balm us
Back into nescience with as little pain
As it is to fall asleep.
This beggarly life,
This poor, flat, hedged-in field—no distance—this
Hollow Pandora-box,
With all the pleasures flown, not even Hope
Left at the bottom!
Superstitious fool,
What brought me here? To see her grave? her ghost?
Her ghost is everyway about me here.
Dora (*coming forward*). Allow me, sir, to pass you.
Harold. Eva!
Dora. Eva!
Harold. What are you? Where do you come from?
Dora. From the farm
Here, close at hand.
Harold. Are you—you are—that Dora,
The sister. I have heard of you. The likeness
Is very striking.
Dora. You knew Eva, then?
Harold. Yes—I was thinking of her when—O yes,
Many years back, and never since have met
Her equal for pure innocence of nature,
And loveliness of feature.
Dora. No, nor I.
Harold. Except, indeed, I have found it once again
In your own self.
Dora. You flatter me. Dear Eva
Was always thought the prettier.
Harold. And *her* charm
Of voice is also yours; and I was brooding
Upon a great unhappiness when you spoke.
Dora. Indeed, you seem'd in trouble, sir.
Harold. And you
Seem my good angel who may help me from it.
Dora (*aside*). How worn he looks, poor man! who is it, I wonder.
How can I help him? (*Aloud.*) Might I ask your name?
Harold. Harold.
Dora. I never heard her mention you.
Harold. I met her first at a farm in Cumberland—
Her uncle's.
Dora. She was there six years ago.
Harold. And if she never mention'd me, perhaps
The painful circumstances which I heard—
I will not vex you by repeating them—
Only last week at Littlechester, drove me
From out her memory. She has disappear'd,
They told me, from the farm—and darker news.
Dora. She has disappear'd, poor darling, from the world—
Left but one dreadful line to say, that we
Should find her in the river; and we dragg'd
The Littlechester river all in vain:
Have sorrow'd for her all these years in vain.
And my poor father, utterly broken down
By losing her—she was his favorite child—
Has let his farm, all his affairs, I fear,
But for the slender help that I can give,
Fall into ruin. Ah! that villain, Edgar,
If he should ever show his face among us,
Our men and boys would hoot him, stone him, hunt him
With pitchforks off the farm, for all of them
Loved her, and she was worthy of all love.

Harold. They say, we should forgive our enemies.
Dora. Ay, if the wretch were dead I might forgive him;
We know not whether he be dead or living.
Harold. What Edgar?
Dora. Philip Edgar of Toft Hall
In Somerset. Perhaps you know him?
Harold. Slightly.
(*Aside.*) Ay, for how slightly have I known myself.
Dora. This Edgar, then, is living?
Harold. Living? well—
One Philip Edgar of Toft Hall in Somerset
Is lately dead.
Dora. Dead!—is there more than one?
Harold. Nay—now—not one, (*aside*) for I am Philip Harold.
Dora. That one, is he then—dead!
Harold. (*Aside.*) My father's death,
Let her believe it mine; this, for the moment,
Will leave me a free field.
Dora. Dead! and this world
Is brighter for his absence as that other
Is darker for his presence.
Harold. Is not this
To speak too pitilessly of the dead?
Dora. My five-years' anger cannot die at once,
Not all at once with death and him. I trust
I shall forgive him—by-and-by—not now.
O sir, you seem to have a heart; if you
Had seen us that wild morning when we found
Her bed unslept in, storm and shower lashing
Her casement, her poor spaniel wailing for her,
That desolate letter, blotted with her tears,
Which told us we should never see her more—
Our old nurse crying as if for her own child,
My father stricken with his first paralysis,
And then with blindness—had you been one of us
And seen all this, then you would know it is not
So easy to forgive—even the dead.
Harold. But sure am I that of your gentleness
You will forgive him. She, you mourn for, seem'd
A miracle of gentleness—would not blur
A moth's wing by the touching; would not crush
The fly that drew her blood; and, were she living,
Would not—if penitent—have denied him *her*
Forgiveness. And perhaps the man himself,
When hearing of that piteous death, has suffer'd
More than we know. But wherefore waste your heart
In looking on a chill and changeless Past?
Iron will fuse, and marble melt; the Past
Remains the Past. But you are young, and—pardon me—
As lovely as your sister. Who can tell
What golden hours, with what full hands, may be
Waiting you in the distance? Might I call
Upon your father—I have seen the world—
And cheer his blindness with a traveller's tales?
Dora. Call if you will, and when you will. I cannot
Well answer for my father; but if you
Can tell me anything of our sweet Eva
When in her brighter girlhood, I at least
Will bid you welcome, and will listen to you.

Now I must go.
Harold. But give me first your hand:
I do not dare, like an old friend, to shake it.
I kiss it as a prelude to that privilege
When you shall know me better.
Dora. (*Aside.*) How beautiful
His manners are, and how unlike the farmer's!
You are staying here?
Harold. Yes, at the wayside inn
Close by that alder-island in your brook,
'The Angler's Home.'
Dora. Are *you* one?
Harold. No, but I
Take some delight in sketching, and the country
Has many charms, altho' the inhabitants
Seem semi-barbarous.
Dora. I am glad it pleases you;
Yet I, born here, not only love the country,
But its inhabitants too; and you, I doubt not,
Would take to them as kindly, if you cared
To live some time among them.
Harold. If I did,
Then one at least of its inhabitants
Might have more charm for me than all the country.
Dora. That one, then, should be grateful for your preference.
Harold. I cannot tell, tho' standing in her presence.
(*Aside.*) She colors!
Dora. Sir!
Harold. Be not afraid of me,
For these are no conventional flourishes.
I do most earnestly assure you that
Your likeness——
[*Shouts and cries without.*
Dora. What was that? my poor blind father—

Enter FARMING MAN.

Farming Man. Miss Dora, Dan Smith's cart hes runned ower a laädy i' the holler laäne, and they ha' ta'en the body up inter your chaumber, and they be all a-callin' for ye.
Dora. The body!—Heavens! I come!
Harold. But you are trembling. Allow me to go with you to the farm.
[*Exeunt.*

Enter DOBSON.

Dobson. What feller wur it as' a' been a-talkin' fur haäfe an hour wi' my Dora? (*Looking after him*). Seeäms I ommost *knaws the back on 'im—drest like a gentleman, too. Damn all gentlemen, says I! I should ha' thowt they'd hed anew o' gentle-foälk, as I telled 'er to-daäy when she fell foul upo' me.

Minds ma o' summun. I could sweär to that; but that be all one, fur I haätes 'im afoor I knaws what 'e be. Theer! he turns round. Philip Hedgar o' Soomerset! Philip Hedgar o' Soomerset!—Noä—yeas—thaw the feller's gone and maäde such a litter of his faäce.

Eh lad, if it be thou, I'll Philip tha! a-plaäyin' the saäme gaäme wi' my Dora—I'll Soomerset tha.

I'd like to drag 'im thruff the hersepond, and she to be a-lookin' at it. I'd like to leather 'im black and blue, and she to be a-laughin' at it. I'd like to fell 'im as deäd as a bullock! (*Clenching his fist.*)

But what 'ud she saäy to that? She telled me once not to meddle wi' 'im, and now she be fallen out wi' ma, and I can't coom at 'er.

It mun be *him*. Noä! Fur she'd niver 'a been talkin' haäfe an hour wi' the divil 'at killed her oän sister, or she beänt Dora Steer.

Yeas! Fur she niver knawed 'is faäce when 'e wur 'ere afoor; but I'll maäke 'er knaw! I'll maäke 'er knaw!

Enter HAROLD.

Naäy, but I mun git out on 'is

waäy now, or I shall be the death on im. [*Exit.*

Harold. How the clown glared at me! that Dobbins, is it,
With whom I used to jar? but can he trace me
Thro' five years' absence, and my change of name,
The tan of southern summers and the beard?
I may as well avoid him.
Ladylike!
Lilylike in her stateliness and sweetness!
How came she by it?—a daughter of the fields,
This Dora!
She gave her hand, unask'd, at the farm-gate;
I almost think she half return'd the pressure
Of mine. What, I that held the orange blossom
Dark as the yew? but may not those, who march
Before their age, turn back at times, and make
Courtesy to custom? and now the stronger motive,
Misnamed free-will—the crowd would call it conscience—
Moves me—to what? I am dreaming; for the past
Look'd thro' the present, Eva's eyes thro' hers—
A spell upon me! Surely I loved Eva
More than I knew! or is it but the past
That brightens in retiring? Oh, last night
Tired, pacing my new lands at Littlechester,
I dozed upon the bridge, and the black river
Flow'd thro' my dreams—if dreams they were. She rose
From the foul flood and pointed toward the farm,
And her cry rang to me across the years,
'I call you, Philip Edgar, Philip Edgar!
Come, you will set all right again, and father
Will not die miserable.' I could make his age
A comfort to him—so be more at peace
With mine own self. Some of my former friends
Would find my logic faulty; let them. Color
Flows thro' my life again, and I have lighted
On a new pleasure. Anyhow we must
Move in the line of least resistance when
The stronger motive rules.
But she hates Edgar.
May not this Dobbins, or some other spy
Edgar in Harold? Well then, I must make her
Love Harold first, and then she will forgive
Edgar for Harold's sake. She said herself
She would forgive him, by-and-by, not now—
For her own sake *then*, if not for mine
—not now—
But by-and-by.

Enter DOBSON *behind.*

Dobson. By-and-by—eh, lad, dosta knaw this paäper? Ye dropt it upo' the road. 'Philip Edgar, Esq.' Ay, you be a pretty squire. I ha' fun' ye out, I hev. Eh, lad, dosta knaw what tha meäns wi' by-and-by? Fur if ye be goin' to sarve our Dora as ye sarved our Eva—then, by-and-by, if she weänt listen to me when I be a-tryin' to saäve 'er—if she weänt——look to thysen, for, by the Lord, I'd think na moor o' maäkin' an end o' tha nor a carrion craw—noä—thaw they hanged ma at 'Size fur it.

Harold. Dobbins, I think!

Dobson. I beänt Dobbins.

Harold. Nor am I Edgar, my good fellow.

Dobson. Tha lies! What hasta been saäyin' to *my* Dora?

Harold. I have been telling her of the death of one Philip Edgar of Toft Hall, Somerset.

Dobson. Tha lies!

Harold (*pulling out a newspaper*). Well, my man, it seems that you can read. Look there—under the deaths.

Dobson. 'O' the 17th, Philip Edgar, o' Toft Hall, Soomerset.' How coom thou to be sa like 'im, then?

Harold. Naturally enough; for I am closely related to the dead man's family.

Dobson. An' ow coom thou by the letter to 'im?

Harold. Naturally again; for as I used to transact all his business for him, I had to look over his letters. Now then, see these (*takes out letters*). Half a score of them, all directed to me—Harold.

Dobson. 'Arold! 'Arold! 'Arold, so they be.

Harold. My name is Harold! Good-day, Dobbins! [*Exit.*

Dobson. 'Arold! the feller's cleän daäzed, an' maäzed, an' maäted, an' muddled ma. Deäd! It mun be true, fur it wur i' print as black as owt. Naäy, but 'Good daäy, Dobbins.' Why, that wur the very twang on 'im. Eh, lad, but whether thou be Hedgar, or Hedgar's business man, thou hesn't naw business 'ere wi' *my* Dora, as I knaws on, an' whether thou calls thysen Hedgar or Harold, if thou stick to she I'll stick to thee—stick to tha like a weasel to a rabbit, I will. Ay! and I'd like to shoot tha like a rabbit an' all. 'Good daäy, Dobbins.' Dang tha!

ACT III.

SCENE.—A Room in Steer's House. Door leading into Bedroom at the back.

Dora (*ringing a handbell*). Milly!

Enter Milly.

Milly. The little 'ymn? Yeäs, Miss; but I wur so ta'en up wi' leädin' the owd man about all the blessed murnin' 'at I ha' nobbut larned mysen haäfe on it.

'O man, forgive thy mortal foe,
Nor ever strike him blow for blow;
For all the souls on earth that live
To be forgiven must forgive.
Forgive him seventy times and seven;
For all the blessed souls in Heaven
Are both forgivers and forgiven.'

But I'll git the book ageän, and larn mysen the rest, and saäy it to ye afoor dark; ye ringed fur that, Miss, didn't ye?

Dora. No, Milly; but if the farming-men be come for their wages, to send them up to me.

Milly. Yeäs, Miss. [*Exit.*

Dora (*sitting at desk counting money*). Enough at any rate for the present. (*Enter* Farming Men.) Good afternoon, my friends. I am sorry Mr. Steer still continues too unwell to attend to you, but the schoolmaster looked to the paying you your wages when I was away, didn't he?

Men. Yeäs; and thanks to ye.

Dora. Some of our workmen have left us, but he sent me an alphabetical list of those that remain, so, Allen, I may as well begin with you.

Allen (*with his hand to his ear*). Halfabitical! Taäke one o' the young 'uns fust, Miss, for I be a bit deaf, and I wur hallus scäared by a big word; leästwaäys, I should be wi' a lawyer.

Dora. I spoke of your names, Allen, as they are arranged here (*shows book*)—according to their first letters.

Allen. Letters! Yeas, I sees now. Them be what they larns the childer' at school, but I were burn afoor schoolintime.

Dora. But, Allen, tho' you can't

read, you could whitewash that cottage of yours where your grandson had the fever.

Allen. I'll hev it done o' Monday.

Dora. Else if the fever spread, the parish will have to thank you for it.

Allen. Meä? why, it be the Lord's doin', noän o' mine; d'ye think *I'd* gi'e 'em the fever? But I thanks ye all the saäme, Miss. (*Takes money.*)

Dora (*calling out names*). Higgins, Jackson, Luscombe, Nokes, Oldham, Skipworth! (*All take money.*) Did you find that you worked at all the worse upon the cold tea than you would have done upon the beer?

Higgins. Noä, Miss; we worked naw wuss upo' the cowd tea; but we'd ha' worked better upo' the beer.

Dora. Come, come, you worked well enough, and I am much obliged to all of you. There's for you, and you, and you. Count the money and see if it's all right.

Men. All right, Miss; and thank ye kindly.

[*Exeunt* Luscombe, Nokes, Oldham, Skipworth.

Dora. Dan Smith, my father and I forgave you stealing our coals.

[Dan Smith *advances to* Dora.

Dan Smith (*bellowing*). Whoy, O lor, Miss! that wur sa long back, and the walls sa thin, and the winders brokken, and the weather sa cowd, and my missus a-gittin' ower 'er lyin'-in.

Dora. Didn't I say that we had forgiven you? But, Dan Smith, they tell me that you—and you have six children—spent all your last Saturday's wages at the ale-house; that you were stupid drunk all Sunday, and so ill in consequence all Monday, that you did not come into the hayfield. Why should I pay you your full wages?

Dan Smith. I be ready to taäke the pledge.

Dora. And as ready to break it again. Besides it was you that were driving the cart—and I fear you were tipsy then, too—when you lamed the lady in the hollow lane.

Dan Smith (*bellowing.*). O lor, Miss! noä, noä, noä! Ye sees the holler laäne be hallus sa dark i' the arternoon, and wheere the big eshtree cuts athurt it, it gi'es a turn like, and 'ow should I see to laäme the laädy, and meä coomin' along pretty sharp an' all?

Dora. Well, there are your wages; the next time you waste them at a pothouse you get no more from me. (*Exit* Dan Smith.) Sally Allen, you worked for Mr. Dobson, didn't you?

Sally (*advancing*). Yeäs, Miss; but he wur so rough wi' ma, I couldn't abide 'im.

Dora. Why should he be rough with you? You are as good as a man in the hayfield. What's become of your brother?

Sally. 'Listed for a soädger, Miss, i' the Queen's Real Hard Tillery.

Dora. And your sweetheart—when are you and he to be married?

Sally. At Michaelmas, Miss, please God.

Dora. You are an honest pair. I will come to your wedding.

Sally. An' I thanks ye fur that, Miss, moor nor fur the waäge.

(*Going—returns.*) 'A cotched ma about the waaist, Miss, when 'e wur 'ere afoor, an' axed ma to be' is little sweet-art, an soä I knaw'd 'im when I seed' im ageän and I telled feyther on 'im.

Dora. What is all this, Allen?

Allen. Why, Miss Dora, meä and my maätes, us three, we wants to hev three words wi' ye.

Higgins. That be 'im, and meä, Miss.

Jackson. An' meä, Miss.

Allen. An' we weänt mention naw naämes, we'd as lief talk o' the Divil afoor ye as 'im, fur they says the master goäs cleän off his 'eäd when he 'eärs the naäme on 'im; but us three, arter Sally'd telled us on 'im, we fun' 'im out a-walkin' i' West Field wi' a white 'at, nine o'clock, upo' Tuesday murnin', and all on us, wi' your leave, we wants to leather 'im.

Dora. Who?

Allen. Him as did the mischief here, five year' sin'.

Dora. Mr. Edgar?

Allen. Theer, Miss! You ha' naämed 'im—not me.

Dora. He's dead, man—dead; gone to his account—dead and buried.

Allen. I beänt sa sewer o' that, fur Sally knaw'd 'im; Now then?

Dora. Yes; it was in the Somersetshire papers.

Allen. Then yon mun be his brother, an' we'll leather *'im*.

Dora. I never heard that he had a brother. Some foolish mistake of Sally's; but what! would you beat a man for his brother's fault? That were a wild justice indeed. Let bygones be bygones. Go home! Good-night! (*All exeunt.*) I have once more paid them all. The work of the farm will go on still, but for how long? We are almost at the bottom of the well: little more to be drawn from it—and what then? Encumbered as we are, who would lend us anything? We shall have to sell all the land, which Father, for a whole life, has been getting together, again, and that, I am sure, would be the death of him. What am I to do? Farmer Dobson, were I to marry him, has promised to keep our heads above water; and the man has doubtless a good heart, and a true and lasting love for me: yet—though I can be sorry for him—as the good Sally says, 'I can't abide him'—almost brutal, and matched with my Harold is like a hedge thistle by a garden rose. But then, he, too—will he ever be of one faith with his wife? which is my dream of a true marriage. Can I fancy him kneeling with me, and uttering the same prayer; standing up side by side with me, and singing the same hymn? I fear not. Have I done wisely, then, in accepting him? But may not a girl's love-dream have too much romance in it to be realized all at once, or altogether, or anywhere but in Heaven? And yet I had once a vision of a pure and perfect marriage, where the man and the woman, only differing as the stronger and the weaker, should walk hand in hand together down this valley of tears, as they call it so truly, to the grave at the bottom, and lie down there together in the darkness which would seem but for a moment, to be wakened again together by the light of the resurrection, and no more partings for ever and for ever. (*Walks up and down. She sings.*)

'O happy lark, that warblest high
Above thy lowly nest,
O brook, that brawlest merrily by
Thro' fields that once were blest,
O tower spiring to the sky,
O grave in daisies drest,
O Love and Life, how weary am I,
And how I long for rest.'

There, there, I am a fool! Tears! I have sometimes been moved to tears by a chapter of fine writing in a novel; but what have I to do with tears now? All depends on me—Father, this poor girl, the farm, everything; and they both love me—I am all in all to both; and he loves me too, I am quite sure of that. Courage, courage! and all will go well. (*Goes to bedroom door; opens it.*) How dark your room is! Let me bring you in here where there is still full daylight. (*Brings* Eva *forward.*) Why, you look better.

Eva. And I feel so much better, that I trust I may be able by-and-by to help you in the business of the farm; but I must not be known yet. Has anyone found me out, Dora?

Dora. Oh, no; you kept your veil too close for that when they carried you in; since then, no one has seen you but myself.

Eva. Yes—this Milly.

Dora. Poor blind Father's little guide, Milly, who came to us three years after you were gone, how should she know you? But now that you have been brought to us as it were from the grave, dearest Eva, and have

been here so long, will you not speak with Father to-day?

Eva. Do you think that I may? No, not yet. I am not equal to it yet.

Dora. Why? Do you still suffer from your fall in the hollow lane?

Eva. Bruised; but no bones broken.

Dora. I have always told Father that the huge old ashtree there would cause an accident some day; but he would never cut it down, because one of the Steers had planted it there in former times.

Eva. If it had killed one of the Steers there the other day, it might have been better for her, for him, and for you.

Dora. Come, come, keep a good heart! Better for me! That's good. How better for me?

Eva. You tell me you have a lover. Will he not fly from you if he learn the story of my shame and that I am still living?

Dora. No; I am sure that when we are married he will be willing that you and Father should live with us; for, indeed, he tells me that he met you once in the old times, and was much taken with you, my dear.

Eva. Taken with me; who was he? Have you told him I am here?

Dora. No; do you wish it?

Eva. See, Dora; you yourself are ashamed of me (*weeps*), and I do not wonder at it.

Dora. But I should wonder at myself if it were so. Have we not been all in all to one another from the time when we first peeped into the bird's nest, waded in the brook, ran after the butterflies, and prattled to each other that we would marry fine gentlemen, and played at being fine ladies?

Eva. That last was my Father's fault, poor man. And this lover of yours—this Mr. Harold—is a gentleman?

Dora. That he is, from head to foot. I do believe I lost my heart to him the very first time we met, and I love him so much—

Eva. Poor Dora!

Dora. That I dare not tell him how much I love him.

Eva. Better not. Has he offered you marriage, this gentleman?

Dora. Could I love him else?

Eva. And are you quite sure that after marriage this gentleman will not be shamed of his poor farmer's daughter among the ladies in his drawing-room?

Dora. Shamed of me in a drawing-room! Wasn't Miss Vavasour, our schoolmistress at Littlechester, a lady born? Were not our fellow-pupils all ladies? Wasn't dear mother herself at least by one side a lady? Can't I speak like a lady; pen a letter like a lady; talk a little French like a lady; play a little like a lady? Can't a girl when she loves her husband, and he her, make herself anything he wishes her to be! Shamed of me in a drawing-room, indeed! See here! 'I hope your Lordship is quite recovered of your gout?' (*Curtsies.*) 'Will your Ladyship ride to cover to-day? (*Curtsies.*) I can recommend our Voltigeur.' 'I am sorry that we could not attend your Grace's party on the 10th!' (*Curtsies.*) There, I am glad my nonsense has made you smile!

Eva. I have heard that 'your Lordship,' and 'your Ladyship,' and 'your Grace' are all growing old-fashioned!

Dora. But the love of sister for sister can never be old-fashioned. I have been unwilling to trouble you with questions, but you seem somewhat better to-day. We found a letter in your bedroom torn into bits. I couldn't make it out. What was it?

Eva. From him! from him! He said we had been most happy together, and he trusted that some time we should meet again, for he had not forgotten his promise to come when I called him. But that was a mockery, you know, for he gave me no address.

and there was no word of marriage; and, O Dora, he signed himself 'Yours gratefully'—fancy, Dora, 'gratefully'! 'Yours gratefully'!

Dora. Infamous wretch! (*Aside.*) Shall I tell her he is dead? No; she is still too feeble.

Eva. Hark! Dora, some one is coming. I cannot and will not see anybody.

Dora. It is only Milly.

Enter MILLY *with basket of roses.*

Dora. Well, Milly, why do you come in so roughly? This sick lady here might have been asleep.

Milly. Pleäse, Miss, Mr. Dobson telled me to saäy he's browt some of Miss Eva's roses for the sick laädy to smell on.

Dora. Take them, dear. Say that the sick lady thanks him! Is he here?

Milly. Yeäs, Miss; and he wants to speak to ye partic'lar.

Dora. Tell him I cannot leave the sick lady just yet.

Milly. Yeäs, Miss; but he says he wants to tell ye summut very partic'lar.

Dora. Not to-day. What are you staying for?

Milly. Why, Miss, I be afeard I shall set him a-sweäring like onythink.

Dora. And what harm will that do you, so that you do not copy his bad manners? Go, child. (*Exit* Milly.) But, Eva, why did you write 'Seek me at the bottom of the river'?

Eva. Why? because I meant it!—that dreadful night! that lonely walk to Littlechester, the rain beating in my face all the way, dead midnight when I came upon the bridge; the river, black, slimy, swirling under me in the lamplight, by the rotten wharfs—but I was so mad, that I mounted upon the parapet——

Dora. You make me shudder!

Eva. To fling myself over, when I heard a voice, 'Girl, what are you doing there?' It was a Sister of Mercy, come from the death-bed of a pauper, who had died in his misery blessing God, and the Sister took me to her house, and bit by bit—for she promised secrecy—I told her all.

Dora. And what then?

Eva. She would have persuaded me to come back here, but I couldn't. Then she got me a place as nursery governess, and when the children grew too old for me, and I asked her once more to help me, once more she said, 'Go home;' but I hadn't the heart or face to do it. And then—what would Father say? I sank so low that I went into service—the drudge of a lodging-house—and when the mistress died, and I appealed to the Sister again, her answer—I think I have it about me—yes, there it is!

Dora (*reads*). 'My dear Child,—I can do no more for you. I have done wrong in keeping your secret; your Father must be now in extreme old age. Go back to him and ask his forgiveness before he dies.—SISTER AGATHA.' Sister Agatha is right. Don't you long for Father's forgiveness!

Eva. I would almost die to have it!

Dora. And he may die before he gives it; may drop off any day, any hour. You must see him at once. (*Rings bell. Enter* Milly.) Milly, my dear, how did you leave Mr. Steer?

Milly. He's been a-moänin' and a-groänin' in 'is sleep, but I thinks he be wakkenin' oop.

Dora. Tell him that I and the lady here wish to see him. You see she is lamed, and cannot go down to him.

Milly. Yeäs, Miss, I will.

[*Exit* Milly.

Dora. I ought to prepare you. You must not expect to find our Father as he was five years ago. He is much altered; but I trust that your return—for you know, my dear, you were always his favorite—will give him, as they say, a new lease of life.

Eva (*clinging to* Dora). Oh, Dora, Dora!

Enter STEER *led by* MILLY.

Steer. Hes the cow cawved?

Dora. No, Father.

Steer. Be the colt deäd?

Dora. No, Father.

Steer. He wur sa bellows'd out wi' the wind this murnin', 'at I tell'd 'em to gallop 'im. Be he deäd?

Dora. Not that I know.

Steer. What hasta sent fur me, then, fur?

Dora (*taking* Steer's *arm*). Well, Father, I have a surprise for you.

Steer. I ha niver been surprised but once i' my life, and I went blind upon it.

Dora. Eva has come home.

Steer. Hoäm? fro' the bottom o' the river?

Dora. No, Father, that was a mistake. She's here again.

Steer. The Steers was all gentlefoälks i' the owd times, an' I worked early an' laäte to maäke 'em all gentlefoälks ageän. The land belonged to the Steers i' the owd times, an' it belongs to the Steers ageän: I bowt it back ageän; but I couldn't buy my darter back ageän when she lost hersen, could I? I eddicated boäth on 'em to marry gentlemen, an' one on 'em went an' lost hersen i' the river.

Dora. No, Father, she's here.

Steer. Here! she moänt coom here. What would her mother saäy? If it be her ghoäst, we mun abide it. We can't keep a ghoäst out.

Eva (*falling at his feet*). O forgive me! forgive me!

Steer. Who said that? Taäke me awaäy, little gell. It be one o' my bad daäys. [*Exit* Steer *led by* Milly.

Dora (*smoothing* Eva's *forehead*). Be not so cast down, my sweet Eva. You heard him say it was one of his bad days. He will be sure to know you to-morrow.

Eva. It is almost the last of my bad days, I think. I am very faint. I must lie down. Give me your arm. Lead me back again.

[Dora *takes* Eva *into inner room.*

Enter MILLY.

Milly. Miss Dora! Miss Dora!

Dora (*returning and leaving the bedroom door ajar*). Quiet! quiet! What is it?

Milly. Mr. 'Arold, Miss.

Dora. Below?

Milly. Yeäs, Miss. He be saäyin' a word to the owd man, but he'll coom up if ye lets 'im.

Dora. Tell him, then, that I'm waiting for him.

Milly. Yeäs, Miss.

[*Exit.* Dora *sits pensively and waits.*

Enter HAROLD.

Harold. You are pale, my Dora! but the ruddiest cheek
That ever charm'd the plowman of your wolds
Might wish its rose a lily, could it look
But half as lovely. I was speaking with
Your father, asking his consent—you wish'd me—
That we should marry: he would answer nothing,
I could make nothing of him; but, my flower,
You look so weary and so worn! What is it
Has put you out of heart?

Dora. It puts me in heart
Again to see you; but indeed the state
Of my poor father puts me out of heart.
Is yours yet living?

Harold. No—I told you.

Dora. When?

Harold. Confusion!—Ah well, well! the state we all
Must come to in our spring-and-winter world
If we live long enough! and poor Steer looks
The very type of Age in a picture, bow'd
To the earth he came from, to the grave he goes to,

Beneath the burthen of years.
Dora. More like the picture
Of Christian in my 'Pilgrim's Progress' here,
Bow'd to the dust beneath the burthen of sin.
Harold. Sin! What sin?
Dora. Not his own.
Harold. That nursery-tale
Still read, then?
Dora. Yes; our carters and our shepherds
Still find a comfort there.
Harold. Carters and shepherds!
Dora. Scorn! I hate scorn. A soul with no religion—
My mother used to say that such a one
Was without rudder, anchor, compass—might be
Blown everyway with every gust and wreck
On any rock; and tho' you are good and gentle,
Yet if thro' any want—
Harold. Of this religion?
Child, read a little history, you will find
The common brotherhood of man has been
Wrong'd by the cruelties of his religions
More than could ever have happen'd thro' the want
Of any or all of them.
Dora. —But, O dear friend,
If thro' the want of any—I mean the true one—
And pardon me for saying it—you should ever
Be tempted into doing what might seem
Not altogether worthy of you, I think
That I should break my heart, for you have taught me
To love you.
Harold. What is this? some one been stirring
Against me? he, your rustic amourist,
The polish'd Damon of your pastoral here,
This Dobson of your idyll?
Dora. No, Sir, no!
Did you not tell me he was crazed with jealousy,
Had threaten'd ev'n your life, and would say anything?
Did *I* not promise not to listen to him,
Nor ev'n to see the man?
Harold. Good; then what is it
That makes you talk so dolefully?
Dora. I told you—
My father. Well, indeed, a friend just now,
One that has been much wrong'd, whose griefs are mine,
Was warning me that if a gentleman
Should wed a farmer's daughter, he would be
Sooner or later shamed of her among
The ladies, born his equals.
Harold. More fool he!
What I that have been call'd a Socialist,
A Communist, a Nihilist—what you will!——
Dora. What are all these?
Harold. Utopian idiotcies.
They did not last three Junes. Such rampant weeds
Strangle each other, die, and make the soil
For Cæsars, Cromwells, and Napoleons
To root their power in. I have freed myself
From all such dreams, and some will say because
I have inherited my Uncle. Let them.
But—shamed of you, my Empress! I should prize
The pearl of Beauty, even if I found it
Dark with the soot of slums.
Dora. But I can tell you,
We Steers are of old blood, tho' we be fallen.
See there our shield. (*Pointing to arms on mantelpiece.*)
For I have heard the Steers
Had land in Saxon times; and your own name
Of Harold sounds so English and so old

I am sure you must be proud of it.
Harold. Not I!
As yet I scarcely feel it mine. I took it
For some three thousand acres. I have land now
And wealth, and lay both at your feet.
Dora. And *what* was
Your name before?
Harold. Come, come, my girl, enough
Of this strange talk. I love you and you me.
True, I have held opinions, hold some still,
Which you would scarce approve of: for all that,
I am a man not prone to jealousies,
Caprices, humors, moods; but very ready
To make allowances, and mighty slow
To feel offences. Nay, I do believe
I could forgive—well, almost anything—
And that more freely than your formal priest,
Because I know more fully than *he* can
What poor earthworms are all and each of us,
Here crawling in this boundless Nature. Dora,
If marriage ever brought a woman happiness
I doubt not I can make you happy.
Dora. You make me
Happy already.
Harold. And I never said
As much before to any woman living.
Dora No?
Harold. No! by this true kiss, *you* are the first
I ever have loved truly.
[*They kiss each other.*
Eva (*with a wild cry*). Philip Edgar!
Harold. The phantom cry! *You* —did *you* hear a cry?
Dora. She must be crying out 'Edgar' in her sleep.
Harold. Who must be crying out 'Edgar' in her sleep.
Dora. Your pardon for a minute. She must be waked.
Harold. Who must be waked?
Dora. I am not deaf: you fright me.
What ails you?
Harold. Speak.
Dora. You know her, Eva.
Harold. Eva!
[*Eva opens the door and stands in the entry.*
She!
Eva. Make her happy, then, and I forgive you. [*Falls dead.*
Dora. Happy! What? Edgar? Is it so? Can it be?
They told me so. Yes, yes! I see it all now.
O she has fainted. Sister, Eva, sister!
He is yours again—he will love *you* again;
I give him back to you again. Look up!
One word, or do but smile! Sweet, do you hear me?
[*Puts her hand on* Eva's *heart.*
There, there—the heart, O God!—the poor young heart
Broken at last—all still—and nothing left
To live for.
[*Falls on the body of her sister.*
Harold. Living . . . dead . . . She said 'all still.
Nothing to live for.'
She—she knows me—now . . .
(*A pause.*)
She knew me from the first, she juggled with me,
She hid this sister, told me she was dead—
I have wasted pity on her—not dead now—
No! acting, playing on me, both of them.
They drag the river for her! no, not they!
Playing on me—not dead now—a swoon—a scene—
Yet—how she made her wail as for the dead!

Enter MILLY.

Milly. Pleäse, Mister 'Arold.
Harold (*roughly*). Well?
Milly. The owd man's coom'd ageän to 'issen, an' wants
To hev a word wi' ye about the marriage.
Harold. The what?
Milly. The marriage.
Harold. The marriage?
Milly. Yeäs, the marriage.
Granny says marriages be maäde i' 'eaven.
Harold. She lies! They are made in Hell. Child, can't you see?
Tell them to fly for a doctor.
Milly. O law—yeäs, Sir!
I'll run fur 'im mysen. [*Exit.*
Harold. All silent there,
Yes, deathlike! Dead? I dare not look: if dead,
Were it best to steal away, to spare myself,
And her too, pain, pain, pain?
My curse on all
This world of mud, on all its idiot gleams
Of pleasure, all the foul fatalities
That blast our natural passions into pains!

Enter DOBSON.

Dobson. You, Master Hedgar, Harold, or whativer
They calls ye, for I warrants that ye goäs
By haäfe a scoor o' naämes—out o' the chaumber.
[*Dragging him past the body.*
Harold. Not that way, man! Curse on your brutal strength!
I cannot pass that way.
Dobson. Out o' the chaumber!
I'll mash tha into nowt.
Harold. The mere wild-beast!
Dobson. Out o' the chaumber, dang tha!
Harold. Lout, churl, clown!
[*While they are shouting and struggling* Dora *rises and comes between them.*

Dora (*to* Dobson). Peace, let him be: it is the chamber of Death!
Sir, you are tenfold more a gentleman,
A hundred times more worth a woman's love,
Than this, this—but I waste no words upon him:
His wickedness is like my wretchedness—
Beyond all language.
(*To* Harold.)
You—you see her there!
Only fifteen when first you came on her,
And then the sweetest flower of all the wolds,
So lovely in the promise of her May,
So winsome in her grace and gaiety,
So loved by all the village people here,
So happy in herself and in her home——
Dobson (*agitated*). Theer, theer! ha' done. I can't abeär to see her. [*Exit.*
Dora. A child, and all as trustful as a child!
Five years of shame and suffering broke the heart
That only beat for you; and he, the father,
Thro' that dishonor which you brought upon us,
Has lost his health, his eyesight, even his mind.
Harold (*covering his face*). Enough!
Dora. It seem'd so; only there was left
A second daughter, and to her you came
Veiling one sin to act another.
Harold. No!
You wrong me there! hear, hear me! I wish'd, if you—— [*Pauses.*
Dora. If I——
Harold. Could love me, could be brought to love me
As I loved you——
Dora. What then?
Harold. I wish'd, I hoped
To make, to make——
Dora. *What* did you hope to make?

Harold. 'Twere best to make an end of my lost life.
O Dora, Dora!
Dora. *What* did you hope to make?
Harold. Make, make! I cannot find the word—forgive it—
Amends.
Dora. For what? to whom?
Harold. To him, to you!
[*Falling at her feet.*
Dora. To *him!* to *me!*
No, not with all your wealth,
Your land, your life! Out in the fiercest storm
That ever made earth tremble—he, nor I—
The shelter of *your* roof—not for one moment—
Nothing from *you!*
Sunk in the deepest pit of pauperism,
Push'd from all doors as if we bore the plague,
Smitten with fever in the open field,
Laid famine-stricken at the gates of Death—
Nothing from you!
But she there—her last word
Forgave—and I forgive you. If you ever
Forgive yourself, you are even lower and baser
Than even I can well believe you. Go!
[*He lies at her feet. Curtain falls.*

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